ROUTLEDGE

Educational Necropolitics

A Sonic Ethnography of Everyday Racisms in U.S. Schools

Boni Wozolek

EDUCATIONAL NECROPOLITICS

Scholars across fields of education have longstanding histories of critically considering the many ways that inequities in schooling are engendered and maintained, and, just as significantly, how these forms of oppression might be resisted and refused. Drawing from these important dialogues, *Educational Necropolitics* shares two years of stories, sounds, and powerful images collected through a sonic ethnographic study. What emerges from this work are the reverberations of how students in this context and, more broadly, how youth across the country often negotiate the intersections of race, genders, sexual orientations, class, and other parts of their complex identities in overwhelmingly white high school settings. This book examines what is produced in the wake of educational necropolitics—the capacity for schools to dictate to what degree minoritized students' ways of being can remain intact—and, significantly, it follows the daily lives of youth as they encounter forms of violence through what schools intend to teach, what is left out, what is learned through everyday interactions, and what is valued through the broader emergent cultural contexts. This groundbreaking work includes interactive e-features that invite readers to travel and interact with participants of the study, which utilizes deep listening in qualitative research and reflects the results of this sonic ethnography. A truly timely text for educators and administrators, *Educational Necropolitics* provides an immersive experience in which leaders can address and correct systemic racist practices in the school setting by drawing directly from first-hand student experiences.

Boni Wozolek is an Assistant Professor of Education at Penn State University, Abington College, USA.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

EDUCATIONAL NECROPOLITICS

A Sonic Ethnography of Everyday Racisms in U.S. Schools

Boni Wozolek

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

Designed cover image: Ya-Meer McKnight, Painting Title: "The moment"

First published 2023
by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2023 Boni Wozolek

The right of Boni Wozolek to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Wozolek, Boni, 1984– author.
Title: Educational necropolitics : a sonic ethnography of everyday racisms in U.S. schools / Boni Wozolek.
Other titles: Sonic ethnography of everyday racisms in United States schools
Description: New York : Routledge, 2023. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2022042345 | ISBN 9781032370859 (Hardback) | ISBN 9781032370637 (Paperback) | ISBN 9781003335245 (eBook)
Subjects: LCSH: Racism in education—United States. | Ethnology—United States. | Ethnomusicology—United States. | Music—Social aspects—United States. | Discrimination in education—United States. | Racism—United States—History—20th century.
Classification: LCC LC212.2 .W69 2023 | DDC 371.82—dc23/eng/20221206
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022042345

ISBN: 978-1-032-37085-9 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-37063-7 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-33524-5 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245

Typeset in Bembo
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

For my beautiful mai, Pepe. Until we can embrace again, I'll hold you in my heart.

For my grandfather, Ray. You lived life with your intellectual curiosities foregrounded. For that and so much more, thank you.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements *viii*
Preface: Sitting with the Ancestors *x*

Introduction: Sonic Orientations and the Strange Fruit of Schools 1

1 Reverberating Knots: Milford and The Crew 33

2 Too Black for School: Finding Places, Making Spaces 53

3 No After School Special 70

4 "And That's My Struggle Bus" 86

5 Interlude: Recapitulation and Re-membering 107

6 Framed, Again 114

7 Arrested by Norms 123

8 Fields, Shame, and Schooling 145

9 Necropolitics of Schooling 164

Appendix *177*
Index *183*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My ways of being, knowing, and doing as a scholar would not be possible without the village that are my people. From my family at home and abroad to my chosen family in the academy, I cannot thank you enough. I would especially like to thank my children, Evalyn and Isaac. When people ask me how I have managed to be successful as a mother-scholar, I wish there were some secret for "doing it all." The reality is that I make sacrifices. Many of those sacrifices cost me time with my children. While I'd like to express my gratitude, I would also like to apologize for anything I might have missed along the way as this book, and my career, came into being. To my partner, Adam, thank you for working to pick up the pieces of those things I missed along the way. To Walter Gershon—This book would not be if it weren't for your guidance and contribution to the field, particularly at the intersection of sound studies and education. To Amoaba Gooden, Anneli Frelin, and James Henderson—Your collective guidance was critical to the first iterations of project. To my parents—Amy, Annie, Baji, Dia, Gary, and Steve—your love and support along the way has not gone unnoticed and continues to be a driving force in my life. To those whose work, care, and love has shaped my ways of being, knowing, and doing as a scholar—Reagan Mitchell, Rob Helfenbein, Thea Berry, Denise Taliaferro Baszile, Ming Fang He, Janet Miller, Jerry Rosiek, Sherick Hughes, Kent den Heyer, Erica Meiners, and Dave Stovall, among others—I am indebted to you. To Micha Rahder for her editorial eye, my deepest appreciation. To my current administration at Penn State Abington—Margo DelliCarpini, Andy August, and Dave Ruth—thank you for always giving me space and support as pre-tenured faculty so this work could be possible.

Finally, I recognize that it is impossible to fully capture all those with whom you stand, and those whose work makes your scholarship possible. Given that this is a sonic ethnography, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to those

who have truly heard me over time. Rather than continuing with an exhaustive, and ultimately incomplete, list of people, I'd like to offer the following playlist[1] to allow you to hear my gratitude. It is my hope that those who have listened deeply to my life and work will ultimately see themselves in these songs.

Glissando of Gratitude

- Track 1: *Fly Me to the Moon*, Frank Sinatra
- Track 2: *Beautiful Boy*, John Lennon
- Track 3: *Over the Rainbow*, Israel Ka'ano'i Kamakawiwo'ole
- Track 4: *Turning Pages*, Eric Bibb
- Track 5: *Long, Long Journey*, Allen Toussaint
- Track 6: *Qualified*, Dr. John
- Track 7: *Easy Living*, Hank Crawford
- Track 8: *Smokestack Lightnin'*, Howlin' Wolf
- Track 9: *Good as Hell*, Lizzo
- Track 10: *No Regrets*, Mwenso and the Shake
- Track 11: *Georgia on My Mind*, Ray Charles
- Track 12: *Fight the Power*, Public Enemy
- Track 13: *Jai Ho!*, A.R. Rahman
- Track 14: *House of the Rising Sun*, The Animals
- Track 15: *Cello Suite No. 1 in G. Major, Prélude*, Johann Sebastian Bach
- Track 16: *Sign 'O the Times*, Prince
- Track 17: *Break up the Concrete*, The Pretenders
- Track 18: *Tank!*, Seatbelts
- Track 19: *Tightrope*, Janelle Monáe
- Track 20: *Ain't Nobody (Gonna Turn Me Around)*, Aretha Franklin

PREFACE

Sitting with the Ancestors

When I was in my twenties, I went on a hike with my cousin in India. We were trying to investigate the ruins of a Portuguese fortress, but the pre-monsoon air was so blisteringly hot that dehydration set in almost immediately. As a second-generation woman who was the daughter of a department store employee and an elementary school teacher in a rural town, I was unable to visit India frequently in my youth. My body was therefore completely unprepared to handle the climate. As we walked, I could feel the heat radiating from the ground through my thin sandals. A rat snake slithered quickly by, headed for the cover of a sprawling banyan tree that sat in the middle of a clearing. The poor creature was no doubt seeking relief from the unforgiving sun. I recall seeing a rhesus monkey peering out from the tree line, watching us move slowly through the clearing as if to ask, "Why have you come here in this heat?" My cousin kept chiding me for moving too slowly, explaining that the fortress was on the edge of a cliff where we would feel the wind from the ocean. My body, with its heavy limbs and thick blood, could not comply immediately, so we took shade under the tree until I was ready.

A decade later, the night before I defended my doctoral dissertation, I had a dream. I was in the same field with my cousin. We were both in our twenties again, just a few years before the motorcycle accident ripped him from my world. In my dream, the day was cool. A soft breeze gently ruffled the palm trees in the distance and caressed the banyan tree's powerful tendrils. The rhesus was there, this time with a look of approval as if to say, "This is much better timing." Feeling refreshed by the wind, I searched for my cousin to comment about the weather and realized that I was alone. At that moment, I noticed a white concrete building beside the tree. A young Kikuyu child stood outside, his shuka[2] a striking shade of red against the white wall behind him. I looked at him for a moment, trying

to recall what my grandmother had told me about losing a child. Had she been living in Kenya at the time? Or Goa? My find felt fuzzy, but before I could let my thoughts wander too much, the boy gestured to me to enter and, without question, I stepped through the door.

"You're in the right place," I heard a woman with a deep, round voice say. I looked across the room to see a full-bodied woman, dressed in a sapphire *tricana poveira*.[3] She moved her hand slightly, showing me another door. "*Bom dia*, child. Go when you're ready," she said with a smile. I hesitated, looking around the room. It had a dirt floor and walls painted the same pink color as those of my grandparents' ancestral house. In the corner was a clay pot with sorpotel cooking over a fire. "What are we celebrating?" I asked, reaching for the spoon. She smacked my hand lightly. "That's for later," she said, gesturing toward the door again.

I walked through the second door to find a much smaller room. A tall, thin man dressed in a green kurta was there. His pronounced cheekbones and sunken eyes gave me pause but his smile seemed familiar. "Almost," he said with a soft, quiet tone. The room was cold, and I felt uneasy. "You shouldn't stay in this place," he said. "It's not for you." I looked at him, shivering slightly from the cool, damp air. "I'm just tired of feeling alone," I said, my body inexplicably overwhelmed with grief. "I know," he said, his eyes filled with a compassion that I couldn't quite name. "That's why this place isn't for you. Go and try not to look back. This place was never for you. I'm sorry you've been here so long. Something else *is* coming." He nodded toward the door and, without a second thought, I made my way through.

The final room was large and round, with a high ceiling that had an opening at the top, flooding the room with light. It was so bright that it stung my eyes at first, but I forced them to stay open. Several shadows were walking slowly around the room and stopped when they realized I had entered. As my eyes adjusted, the figures became visible. There stood my cousin, who had transitioned 10 years before. He was with my maternal grandparents, a great uncle, my paternal grandfather, and a host of other people I had only seen in photographs. My cousin looked at me and smiled as he clapped me on the back, "I told you, dear cousin. You always move too slowly. Glad you made it."

My maternal grandfather embraced me tightly. "Are you ready?" he asked. "No," I said, breathing in a scent from my childhood, a mixture of mothball-tinged books and Old Spice. "I don't want to fail you all," I said, feeling like a child in his arms.

"My dear, you will not fail. You are ready," my paternal grandfather said. My memory of his voice was that of a frail, old man. In this world his voice was strong, with a confidence I was not used to hearing. For a moment, I imagined this is what his presence must have felt like when he was young.

"How will I know when I'm ready? When will it be time?" I asked, looking at my maternal grandmother. She was a woman who, in her previous form, had worried constantly. Here, she was calm, composed, and reassuring.

"When you see the light," my maternal grandfather said, letting me go slightly, as if the answer was obvious.

"And we will be here, my rosebud," my maternal grandmother said with a smile.

"Like the banyan has roots to sustain it, so do you. Just look for the light," said an Indian Aunty that I had never met.

I glanced around the room. "What light?" I asked myself. "It's already so bright here." At that moment I woke up, a single ray of light streaming from behind the blackout curtains onto the foot of the bed. My alarm would not go off for another half hour. I sat, watched the light, and felt the warmth of those who had passed, their presence still lingering on my soul.

Before I began my defense, my dissertation chair nodded at me and said, "Are you ready to begin?"

"Yes," I replied, feeling more at peace than I had in years.

Origins: Re-turning to Things Left Behind

We are entanglements of origins. Sometimes they consume us. Sometimes they liberate us. Sometimes they hang in the background, like a trinket in the curiosity cabinet of our lives, largely unnoticed until we attend to them and fold them back into the narratives we tell. When we bring our beginnings into focus, we sometimes recall them with care, or indifference, or anger. Yet, no matter what we think of our beginnings, attention to origins is universal (Foster-Hanson & Rhodes, 2020; Wright, 2004). Like Della Pollock's (1999) discussion of birth, our origin stories are everywhere and yet nowhere. For example, the origins of superheroes and villains light up the silver screen while our own beginnings often go unnoticed, even by ourselves.

Recently I've been thinking about origin stories. Specifically, I've been wondering how we trace our beginnings. I've been curious about which pieces we embrace, how we decide to tell our stories, and which parts we discard for particular audiences. Sylvia Wynter (2001) writes that we are a "storytelling species" (p. 34). This is especially true when it comes to our origin stories which, as McKittrick (2021) argues, are enmeshed with our ontoepistemologies.

Origins, however, are tricky. This is because, to borrow from Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) discussion of rhizomes, they are an entanglement of middles, rather than a straight line with clear beginning and end points. This book, for example, is in some ways the origin of my scholarly journey, a reworking of data collected early in my career. It also marks some midpoints across named and unnamed contexts—data pulled from the middle of participants' lives, moments of reflection from across my time as a K–12 teacher, ideas drawn from my own experiences that are always already connected to ancestral roots.

Tracing the trajectory of beginnings is therefore liminal (Collins, 2019), leading us to ask questions like: What are the contours of our lives? Which margins

do we map (Crenshaw, 1991)? On whose demonic grounds (McKittrick, 2006) do we stand? Glissant (1989) engages these questions, suggesting that the cartographies created with and from colonization expose "various kinds of madness" (p. 166). As children of colonization, the madness of loss, of grief, from past, present, and future oppressions often drives our counternarratives as we sit in the middle, searching through pilfered, raped, and maimed origins.

The context from which this book emerged stirs up my own madness. It flows from a place where overwhelming whiteness was so thickly marinated in cisheteropatriarchy that my mind often turned to thoughts of suicide, from a place of trauma (un)intentionally imposed by colleagues and the broader community. Similarly, the ideas in this book arise from a research space where participants were soul weary. These youth lived in a context where, as I describe in detail throughout the book, they faced a kind of ontoepistemological choking (Du Bois, 1926) and lynching (Woodson, 1933) from everyday oppressions and intra-actions (Barad, 2007) with racisms enmeshed with sexual and gender prejudices; what I have come to call "educational necropolitics." Although my goal here is not to engage psychoanalytically, this book can be said to have emerged from the penultimate room in my dream—a place where cold despair permeated my ways of being, knowing, and doing, rendering me alone and hopeless.

Returning to the space that created this work is therefore difficult in the way that engagement with violence tends to be taxing, for the violence that is central to whiteness always causes ripples of trauma across space and time (Dixon-Román, 2017; Sharpe, 2016). However, as the continuous assault on Black[4] and brown people persists in the United States, as queer bodies are maimed without making headlines, and as centers for sexual assault continue to be overwhelmed with survivors seeking refuge, a re-turn to the moments I had long compartmentalized is significant. For, as Woodson (1933) suggested, these forms of violence find their origins in the schoolroom. This "provocation for an urgent reassessment" (Kirby, 2011, p. 3) is an engagement with the multiplicities that are our origins, a way of sitting in the middles to trace the entanglements of what was and what is, and to interrupt what may be.

Me, Myself, and I

As I resisted revisiting this data, I had another dream. I was back in the room where I met my ancestors. However, rather than a place filled with the light and love of those who have transitioned, I met two versions of myself. The first, a sickly, cowering thing that I hardly recognized, lay in the corner of the room, hemorrhaging despair and sobbing dusty tears. The other, a strong, confident woman, stood over her, offering a hand so she could get up. The first repeatedly refused assistance, murmuring to herself about being beyond saving. I stood in the doorway, watching the scene for a moment, before joining them, sitting down on the ground next to the first.

"She's not ready," said the second.

"I've never been ready," whimpered the first.

I sat for a while, wishing that the journey that had led me so far away and yet returned me to this place had given me words or perhaps some trinket to guide me through it. My eyes met those of the first woman. "I'm here," I whispered, my voice reminding me of my grandfather's, soft but with traces of confidence and care. "You are my roots, sad as you are. Part of you sustains me."

"Will I be ready to go back?" asked the second, suddenly uneasy.

"Yes," I said. "They can't take the light from us now."

Notes

1 To hear this playlist, go to: https://boniwozolek.com/index.php/books-2/educational-necropolitics/necropolitical-sounds-of-schooling/acknowledgements/ or https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXJ6Hpyj6nbrdk4odX6dgC1rObQs-BpZS
2 The Kikuyu are a Bantu-speaking group native to central Kenya, a country where my father and his family lived for several years during my father's youth. A shuka is a garment that is often red.
3 A *tricana poveira* is a traditional style of Portuguese women's clothing. Goa, India, where my paternal ancestors are from, was colonized by the Portuguese.
4 The capitalization of "Black" throughout this book and not "white" or "brown" is done with intention. The purpose is to, on one hand, attend to the shared sense of community in the diaspora among Black people and communities while, on the other, resisting shared supremacist dialogues around whiteness. This rationale is aligned with other publishing spaces like *The Columbia Journalism Review,* as well as scholars like Kimberlécha Crenshaw (1991).

Bibliography

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.
Collins, P. H. (2019). *Intersectionality as critical social theory*. Duke University Press.
Crenshaw, C. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity, and violence against women of color, *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241–1300.
Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus*. Trans. Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press.
Dixon-Román, E.J. (2017). *Inheriting possibility: Social reproduction and quantification in education*. University of Minnesota Press.
Du Bois, W. E. B. (1926). Criteria of Negro art. *The Crisis, 32*, 290–297.
Foster-Hanson, E., & Rhodes, M. (2020). How origin stories shape children's social reasoning. *Cognitive Development*, *56*, 1–15. DOI: 10.1016/j.cogdev.2020.100962
Glissant, E. (1986). *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays*. Trans. J. Michael Dash. Caraf Books.
Kirby, V. (2011). *Quantum anthropologies: Life at large*. Duke University Press.
McKittrick, K. (2006). *Demonic grounds: Black women and cartographies of struggle*. University of Minnesota Press.
McKittrick, K. (2021). *Dear science and other stories*. Duke University Press.

Pollock, D. (1999). *Telling bodies, performing births*. Columbia University Press.
Sharpe, C. (2016). *In the wake: On blackness and being*. Duke University Press.
Woodson, C.G. (1933). *The miseducation of the negro*. Tribeca Books.
Wright, J.H. (2004). *Origin stories in political thought: Discourses on gender, power, and citizenship*. University of Toronto Press.
Wynter, S. (2001). Towards the sociogenic principle: Fanon, identity, the puzzle of conscious experience, and what it is like to be "Black." In M.F. Durán-Cogan and A. Gómez-Moriana (Eds.), *National identities and sociopolitical changes in Latin America* (pp. 30–66). Routledge.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

INTRODUCTION

Sonic Orientations and the Strange Fruit of Schools

Sid:[1] Woz! I just heard this super old song. It's by this woman, Billie Holiday. Have you heard of her?
Wozolek: [chuckles softly] Yes. I have. Which of her songs did you hear?
Sid: This song called "Strange Fruit." Have you heard it?
Wozolek: Yes. That's a powerful song. How did you feel listening to it?
Sid: I felt like I could really relate. To her. To the song. To the whole thing.
Wozolek: How so?
Sid: Well, it's not just that she's a Black woman and I'm a Black woman. It's the whole thing about strange fruit. Do you know it's a metaphor? A metaphor for, like, people being lynched.
Wozolek: Yes. I recall. What are your thoughts on it?
Sid: That's the crazy part. She's talking about the horrors of lynching. And, I was listening to it, you know, and thinking that . . . Okay, I know it's not the same thing and I'm not trying to make it equal, okay? But, like, sometimes I feel like we . . . Black kids I mean . . . we are the strange fruit of school. They don't care if we rot [voice breaks]. They don't care if we die. They just care if we are out of the way.

Strange fruit. How does a Black child come to see herself as the "bitter crop," left for the "sun to rot" in schools? In 1933, Carter G. Woodson wrote that teaching children that their blackness is a "curse . . . is the worst sort of lynching." When schools and communities strip Black youth of their agency, Woodson argued, "it kills one's aspirations." He further explicated that "there would be no lynching if

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245-1

it did not start in the schoolroom" (p. 3). Although Woodson's words were written nearly ninety years ago, the violent relationship between schools and communities continues to disproportionately impact Black youth.

In contemporary schools across the United States, Black voices and perspectives are largely absent from the formal curriculum (Wood et al., 2020), Black teachers remain underrepresented among educators (Farinde-Wu, Butler, & Allen-Handy, 2020), and neoliberal practices continue to destroy spaces of and for Black excellence (Neal-Jackson, 2018). As racist ideas about blackness spill (Gumbs, 2016) from classrooms into broader culture, it is perhaps no surprise that Black communities are disproportionately economically disenfranchised (Hsu et al., 2021), nor that the school-to-prison[2] and school-to-coffin pipelines are lined with the experiences of Black youth (Mallett, 2015; Wozolek, 2018), nor that African American mental and physical health continues to be largely ignored (Goldman et al., 2020) across sociopolitical spaces.

The purpose of this book is to attend to the messy, complex, recursive relationships between schools and communities. Aligned with longstanding dialogues about systems of schooling as sites of cultural reproduction (Apple, 1982; Paris & Alim, 2017; Willis, 1977; Woodson, 1933), this book examines the spaces and places in school where various forms of capital (e.g., Bourdieu, 1993; Wozolek, 2021b) normalize violence against students of color. While the locus of this book is Milford High, a Midwestern suburban high school where I spent two years engaging in sonic ethnographic research (Gershon, 2017), the argument is not necessarily specific to the school, nor to the events and interactions documented during my time there. Rather, these events are iterations of how systemic injustices are perpetuated, even in light of contemporary practices and procedures that purport to interrupt them.

Milford High, like many suburban schools across the United States, boasted state-recognized excellence along with a wealth of opportunities in which students could engage during their high school experience. Their music program was known across the state, their athletes would sometimes receive full college scholarships, and their club activities included diverse perspectives and voices—from one of the strongest Genders and Sexualities Alliance (GSA) groups in the area, to a nationally ranked debate team, to an art club, to a politically conservative youth group. Milford High was therefore highly regarded by parents and guardians as a "strong school" with some of the "most dedicated teachers in the state." Administrators in Milford City Schools held a very public sense of pride regarding the number of students who transferred into the district from neighboring rural and city schools, and teachers generally spent the majority of their careers in the district. As one parent remarked, "Milford City Schools is *the* place to be."

The strengths of any public school, Milford High included, should be celebrated. Too many times public schools are criticized and, as schools in the United States continue to be privatized and corporatized, a recognition of how schools positively serve their students and broader communities is important. My goal is

not to add to literatures and political rhetoric about the failure of public schools. Rather, my purpose is to think critically about how a school that is ranked by the state, parents, and administrators as "successful" can still be harmful to marginalized youth, maintaining violent norms that speak and leak into the broader community (Helfenbein, 2010). As Ann Winfield (2007) argues, it is in moments when we are most self-congratulatory that we should move with caution and reflexivity.

During this study, for example, several student and parent participants mentioned feeling as though Milford offered strong educational opportunities, with some noting that, from their perspective, the school was located in an affluent suburb. In the mid-2000s, Milford's median household income was over $65,000 and it had a poverty rate of less than 9%. This sentiment was especially shared among students who had moved from the closest city space to the suburbs as they reflected on the relatively new school building, its facilities, and faculty. Davonte, a high school senior, said, "The school has money. Like serious money. That's why they are 'excellent.' My last school didn't have all that. I think it's why we have so many things available to us, 'cuz, you know ain't nothin' for free."

Davonte would go on to explain that although Milford was strong across the categories by which school excellence is often measured (e.g., Brooks & Normore, 2017), Black student emotional health was absent in these metrics. "It's not just about being lost in the system," he said. "It's about the fact that the system tries to lose you. It feels like it's on purpose and, honestly, no one gives a damn about another lost Black kid." The interview with Sid at the beginning of this chapter underscores Davonte's point: too often, Black people and communities pay the price for white success.

Thinking about how communities of color pay for white achievement is certainly not new in educational literature. Scholars and activists have reflected on the (micro)aggressions that people of color endure, which lead to racial battle fatigue (e.g., Benson et al., 2020; Yosso et al., 2009). Complicated conversations have focused on how Black youth pay the price for school segregation (García, 2020), both across and within districts. Finally, several dialogues focus on how school inequities impact the individual and collective wealth of communities of color (Ríos & Longoria, 2021). These are but a few examples of the many ways that cultural reproduction in educational contexts are iterations of what Hervé Varenne and Ray McDermott (1998) call the "successful failure" of schools for Black and brown youth and their communities.

The entanglements through which sociopolitical and cultural norms are knotted (Nespor, 1997) and reproduced in schools therefore represent a complex intra-relationship between the possibilities of success—what parents, students, teachers, and community members note about Milford City Schools—and the many ways that systems of schooling can fail students and communities. This introduction attends to some of these complications by discussing questions of agency and power as they are imbricated with the theorization of educational necropolitics as it is braided with the overarching metaphor of ontoepistemological choking and

lynching in schools. It is important to remember that while these terms are evocative, they are connected to scholarly dialogues across African American intellectual traditions that can be heard throughout sociohistorical spaces, from Anna Julia Cooper (1892) to contemporary scholars like Bettina Love (2019). It is also significant that ideas like violence and joy that impact and spring from communities of color are too often presented as a binary: portraying people and groups of color either as unable to escape the violence of the system or as able to find joy despite historical and contemporary iterations of violence. Rather than present these ideas as a binary, which too often unintentionally flattens the experiences of minoritized people and communities, I attend to the messiness of agency and power that exists within, and because of, these entangled affects.

Affects exist as shuttling intensities, a multiplicity of the in-between, the not-quite, the on-time, or perhaps the too-late sets of intentions that we attend to as they are expressed in and across human and nonhuman bodies (Ahmed, 2010; Gershon, 2013b). They are the expansions and contractions that emerge from relationships, the "overspills that *form of relation* as a rhythm, a fold, a timing, a habit, a contour, or a shape that comes to park the passages of intensities (whether dimming or accentuating) in body-to-body/world-body imbrication" (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 13). While the slippery nature of affects makes them difficult to trace, the next section attends to questions of agency in and among some of the most difficult affects encountered by our bodies—in this case, the affects that (un)intentionally murder the spirits of children (Love, 2019) across systems of schooling.

Agentic Contingencies: The Imbrications of Actions

Agency in relation to power is complex. One only need to consider contexts where enacting agency, that exists in some places but not in others, is not easy. It is also possible for agency to be enacted (un)intentionally. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are also intersections within and across seemingly binary-bound positions, allowing multiple movements that spark, hinder, halt, or accelerate lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983) within and against structures. Perhaps this is because agency is always already intra-related to power. Using Sherry Ortner's (2006) comprehensive review of scholarly dialogues on the relationship between agency and power, I consider the limiting factors that students experience and how, despite many barriers, students manage to carve out spaces to feel emotionally safe in school.

Ortner begins by arguing that scholarly dialogues focused on power and agency are a continuum, stretching between a view that power is absolute to one that portrays power as present but not entirely controlling. She begins with Michel Foucault, who argues that power is ubiquitous in ways that are psychologically invasive. In other words, through Foucault's (1978) theorization of power, local actors remain largely unaware of the power structures at play in their daily

lives. This impacts one's ability to act against systems that go largely unnoticed or unabated. Ortner writes that the work of scholars like James Scott resides on the opposite end of this dialogue. Scott (1990) argues that although power is real and influential, it is not psychologically invasive. This means that local actors remain fully aware of oppression and of the conditions under which domination occurs, allowing them to enact far more agency than understood in Foucauldian notions of power. Finally, Ortner places theorists like Raymond Williams as intermediaries. Williams (1983) writes that local actors are positioned by and through power relations but never in total or absolute ways. Coming from a cultural studies perspective, Williams argues that people have at least some degree of awareness of the ways that culture is reproduced through power, allowing people to somewhat enact agency.

Ortner uses the imbrications of these frameworks on power to explicate her use of practice theory, arguing that power is "strongly controlling but never complete or total" (Ortner, 2006, p. 7). Similar to Goffman's (1961) work on the "underlife," Spivak's (1988) discussion of the "subaltern," or Mills' (1997) take on "subpersons," Ortner's way of describing the relationship of power and agency is helpful for thinking about resistance and refusal[3] within and across systems of oppression. While there are many inroads to practice theory (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Foucault, 1978; Giddens, 1984; Schatzki, 2002), Ortner describes it as the relationship between sociopolitical structures and the local actors that intra-act with them. Ortner suggests that practice theory is one way to attend to how local actors are part of the social process without losing sight of the larger structures that constrain (but also enable) agency. It is important to note that "intra-action" is not Ortner's language and, instead, is my sewing together of Barad's (2007) theory with practice theory. This shift is significant as it makes explicit the coconstruction of agency and subjectivities in ways that are not always clear in practice theory dialogues.

Ortner's practice theory is significant in this book as it is central to my consideration of power dynamics between bodies—both human and nonhuman—both in schools and in the context of my qualitative research. Ortner argues that an underlying facet of practice theory is a "power shift," which moves the researcher's attention from the power one group exercises over another to the power dynamics between individuals. This is not to say that practice theorists do not attend to how individual dynamics impact communities or that group dynamics are ignored when analyzing individual relationships. Rather, while practice theorists often begin on the microscale of relationships, they tack back and forth between micro and macro dynamics.

Much like Agar's (1996) discussion of abductive reasoning within ethnographic research, in which he argues that questions must change in light of the data, practice theory offers a way of attending to inherently complex relations that occur in research contexts. For me, as a qualitative researcher and a former teacher in schools, this meant consistently thinking reflexively (Lather, 1986; Sheldon, 2017)

about how and how much my participation in the context was entangled with other bodies. Additionally, practice theory is helpful in conceptualizing the fluidity and reproduction of cultures. Ortner (2006) writes that practice theory conceptualizes the iterations and recursions between people and cultures, explaining the reciprocal relations that occur "through practice in the world, and the production of the world itself through practice" (p. 16). She emphasizes that culture is defined in multiple ways, as individuals give it meaning while maintaining (un)known connections between broader cultural ideas and ideals. Re-turning to Woodson's (1933) work on how social reproduction through schools disproportionately impacts Black bodies, practice theory becomes all the more significant as a tool to analyze data that explicitly discusses the violence students of color experience at school.

As cultural norms and values are reproduced, friction occurs. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2005) describes friction as the "awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference . . . that co-produce cultures" (p. 4). Tsing describes friction using the metaphor of a tire moving on the road: friction is necessary for movement but, through that movement, both the tire and the road are worn down over time. Returning to Ortner's framing of power as controlling but not absolute as it is enmeshed here with Barad's (2007) work, hegemonic structures might wear the tire down faster than the road, but intra-actions that coconstitute agency still allows actors to slowly erode sociopolitical power over time. As students create safe spaces in schools, they too encounter different kinds of friction that wear at their ways of being, knowing, and doing and are significant to the ontological violence they encounter. This is not meant to denigrate any agency they enact by carving out space but, rather, to draw attention to the psychological and physical toll that creating such space can take.

In addition to Ortner and other anthropologists who have theorized the relationship between power and agency, this book also leans on contemporary dialogues that engage the metaphorical and material assemblages that exist between bodies (e.g., Barad, 2007; DeLanda, 2016; Puar, 2017; Weheliye, 2014; Wozolek, 2021a), using these to explore how agency emerges from within relationships, rather than from outside of them. The work of scholars like Karen Barad (2007), Jasbir Puar (2017), and Alexander Weheliye (2014), among others, are important to my understanding of how bodies intra-act and produce coconstituted subjectivities.

To be clear, there are several approaches to how human and nonhuman bodies coproduce agency. As I describe in depth throughout this book, curriculum theorists have longstanding dialogues on the relationships between the bodies of schools—from human bodies to the body of the building, the structural body of schooling, the bodies of lessons (both intended and unintended), and the like—that form and inform what is learned in schools (e.g., Apple 1993; Giroux & Penna, 1983; Page, 2006). Indigenous scholars have theorized, for example, the relationships between human bodies and bodies of nature (e.g., Driskill, 2011;

Todd, 2016), bringing in a related but distinct perspective on assemblages. I think through agency and power as they are entangled with assemblages here not to declare the relevancy of one field over another, as relevancy is just another exercise in power relations (Gershon, 2020). Rather, I pay explicit attention to the way that new materialist—or relational materialisms (e.g., Glissant, 1986; Kuntz, 2019)—and posthuman conversations are resonant with my data. Specifically, thinking through the intra-actions of people, places, spaces, objects, and affects that are agentic helps me consider how agency was emergent in this research context, while also attending to the structures that supported, interrupted, and excluded Black and brown youth in schools.

Agency emerges from within affective assemblages through what Karen Barad (2007) has called intra-actions. It is important to pause and note that *intra*-actions differ from *inter*-actions. Through *inter*actions, bodies maintain a level of independence, where in *intra*-actions, subjectivities materialize from within an event between bodies, not outside of it. This language is yet another tool for thinking about the relationships between people, matter, nature, materials, and discourses. It is important, however, to consider how the power dynamics that each body brings into an intra-action shape how agency materializes from an event. In other words, bodies are never without agency nor outside of structures of power; both of these are central aspects of emergent phenomena.

Intra-actions are therefore always formed and informed by power. This is akin to Weheliye's (2014) discussion of racializing assemblages, whereby race is not a cultural or biological construction but a set of "sociopolitical processes that discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans" (p. 4). Although painful, reflect for a moment on the murder of George Floyd. Although one could argue that those intra-acting in the event are Officer Chauvin, Mr. Floyd, other officers on the scene, and those who were traumatized by witnessing the event, the intra-action has spilled well beyond those who were present on 38th Street in Minneapolis. The events that transpired on May 25, 2020, in Mr. Floyd's murder can be thought of as an intra-action between local and less-local human bodies, discourses on blackness, politics, media, and previous work in the Black Lives Matter movement. That horrific moment was also a sociohistorical entanglement with racism that normalized Black death in ways that meant Mr. Chauvin felt his actions were justifiable. The events that transpired were not just a murder but a phenomenon that was made and unmade through intra-actions. Although not everyone personally intra-acted with Floyd's death, most United States citizens and communities across the world intra-acted with the phenomenon in some fashion.

Unlike some interpretations of Barad's work, I argue that intra-action is not an immediately emergent phenomenon. Instead, events are made possible by sociocultural norms and values as they relate to questions of power, and exist within, between, and around contexts. Aligned with generations of critical Black scholars (e.g., Cooper, 1892; Douglass, 1845; McKittrick, 2021; Weheliye, 2014; Woodson,

1933), assemblage and practice theories are helpful in unpacking how agency itself is a form of power. For example, Jerry Rosiek (2018) argues that racism is agentic. He writes that this "is not a claim that things have consciousness or make plans. It is instead a claim that reality of phenomena lies in the relations established through a process of intra-action" (p. 81). Thinking through the ways that racism has agency in its movements and ability to shape sociocultural norms and phenomena is an incredibly powerful tool in tracing how violence at once erupts through moments of aggression while also insidiously moving and maintaining cultural norms. Whether one considers this through people who use power to enact agency or in terms of agency that is emergent from an event, both contexts and bodies are imbued with power in explicit and implicit ways that matter, especially for youth in schools.

Educational Necropolitics: Ontoepistemological Choking and Lynching in Schools

As I explicate throughout this book, youth like Sid consistently discuss what I call the ontoepistemological choking and lynching that impact Black and brown youth at Milford High. Dialogues about this kind of metaphorical violence are not new. As stated earlier, Carter G. Woodson (1933) described how "lynching starts in the schoolroom" (p. 3). W.E.B. Du Bois (1903) discussed the ways that white supremacy "chokes away beauty" (p. 294). Anna Julia Cooper (1892), describing the relationship between peace and conflict in sociopolitical progress, gestured toward the suffocating violence of whiteness for Black people and communities. She wrote, "we should die of inanition . . . [from] the bully with his foot on the breast of his last antagonist" (p. 150). In contemporary scholarship, there are several dialogues that resonate with these African American intellectual traditions, critically explicating the many ways that schools are sites of ontoepistemological, historical, and cultural death for Black and brown youth (e.g., Evans-Winters, 2017; Gershon, 2022; King, 2020; Laura, 2014; Love, 2019; Morris, 2016).

Evocative images of death and dying in schools—from the normalized lessons that teach children that blackness is a curse to the educational process that "kills one's aspirations" (Woodson, 1933, p. 3)—portray the reality of the consistent dehumanization of Black and brown youth in these spaces. This book presents choking and lynching as metaphors that emerged from the data. However, it is important to remember that these metaphors are not necessarily a reflection on this specific school. Instead, I call for thinking critically about how these metaphors align with historical and contemporary dialogues that have violent material realities for Black and brown students and communities. Additionally, I reflect on how this data supports broader dialogues across African American intellectual traditions that discuss how these violent norms, values, and material consequences spill from schools into Black and brown communities in multiple and ongoing ways. One only need recall practices of redlining and gerrymandering (Gilroy,

2000; Rothstein, 2018), iterations of Jim Crow (Alexander, 2012), health care disparities for communities of color (Washington, 2008), and the necessity of the Black Lives Matter movement (Lebron, 2017) to recognize the continuous points of oppression that impact Black and brown people and communities across the United States; oppressions that are in circulation within schools.

Educational necropolitics through ontoepistemological choking and lynching can therefore be understood as engaging the data through Sankofa. Sankofa is a metaphorical symbol used by the Akan people of Ghana to signify the necessity to look back and retrieve one's past knowledges in order to move forward with the ancestor's knowledges in mind. Educational necropolitics returns to dialogues within African American intellectual traditions, fetching the lessons intellectual ancestors painstakingly theorized, analyzed, and published, along with those lessons passed through oral and cultural traditions. At the same time, this theory carefully considers what contemporary scholars have articulated. The imbrications of these perspectives are helpful in thinking deeply about the violent iterations and recursions of dehumanization that pass between classrooms and communities. These were present at Milford, materializing in moments like Sid's feeling of being and becoming the "strange fruit" of school.

In this book, I both consider the conditions under which a student feels the weight of educational choking or lynching while thinking deeply about how necropolitics is normalized through schools through what I call *educational necropolitics*. Educational necropolitics are the many ways that schools and systems of schooling dictate whose ways of being, knowing, and doing should survive and thrive in schools, and to what degree minoritized students' ontoepistemologies should be silenced or murdered through various forms of curriculum. Given the relationship between schools and communities, while local actors might not be aware of their participation in educational necropolitics, every local actor in contact with schools and communities has some role in either carrying out necropolitical norms and values, resisting or refusing them, or some combination therein. Further, as theorized below, educational necropolitics, like other necropolitical dialogues (e.g., Evans-Winters, 2017; Mbembe, 2003; Puar, 2017), impacts bodies not only in schools but across communities and is an intentional tool for engendering and maintaining power over minoritized people and communities.

This framework uses Achille Mbembe's (2019) description of necropolitics as the insidious weapons employed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and communities; the "capacity to dictate who is able to live and who must die" (p. 66). An extension of Foucault's (1978) framing of biopolitics and biopower, Mbembe (2019) uses necropolitics to theorize the conditions under which people and communities become disposable. Foucault's work describes movement between sovereign, disciplinary, and biopower, attending to how sovereign rulers retain power by deciding who can live. Foucault then moves from sovereignty to notions of biopower; the sociopolitical system that controls and commands life through systems like healthcare. Therefore, for the purposes of my

arguments here, it can be said that the act of killing renders rulers as targets while exerting control through biopower gives the veneer of benevolence while maintaining lines of power that are exclusionary and dehumanizing.

Mbembe's argument for what he calls necropolitics speaks to an absence in Foucault's understandings about how everyday biopolitics can whittle away at what it means to be human. One only needs to reflect on historical moments when education in the United States has provided the conditions to render students of color disposable (e.g., eugenics, Indigenous boarding schools, Plessy v. Ferguson, among other examples) or created states of emergency that positioned students of color as a "problem" to national school success (e.g., dialogue around education reform movements like No Child Left Behind). Mbembe's arguments can be understood as tracing the cartographies that normalize states of emergency and therefore governmental control to discuss how the "enemy" is often rendered phantasmal in the interest of buttressing sociopolitical violence. By this Mbembe means that necropolitics render people as liminal and immaterial. Across these points, Mbembe argues that necropolitics allows for the sociopolitical and cultural killing of the enemy without distinction (Wozolek, 2021b).

Necropolitics can therefore be used not only to discuss the physical death of people and communities—be it through genocide, enslavement, or apartheid—but also to theorize the conditions of what Mbembe calls the *living dead*. Mbembe describes dehumanization to the point of being/becoming the living dead as disconnecting people from communities, a loss of bodily autonomy, and stripping people from political status. Recalling images of enslaved Africans, colonization, and concentration camps, Mbembe describes the conditions of the living dead. This book pivots on the theoretical argument that there is something that can be understood as educational necropolitics. In this work, educational necropolitics is understood as normalized educational choking and lynching, a process and product of relegating minoritized students to the status of the living dead in schools. Unlike Mbembe's more linear and sequential approach to theorization, this book argues that necropolitical control in systems of schooling is fluid and often hard to name, making it all the more insidious and effective (Rosiek, 2018; Wozolek, 2021a). Educational necropolitics promote the everyday death worlds of schooling that dehumanize through the forced (un)learning one's ways of being, knowing, and doing. Although most of the student participants in this book are students of color, it is important to consider how educational necropolitics are enacted against all marginalized populations in schools. One only need to consider the ongoing war on LGBTGNQIA2S+ youth through absences in the curriculum, banned books, a lack of facilities for trans and gender expansive youth, and other newly written and enacted laws that specifically target queer youth in schools. Educational necropolitics therefore exists beyond curricula, spilling across policies, practices, and laws that impact marginalized youth. Deployed "in the interest of maximum destruction" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 40), educational necropolitics exist by design, murdering marginalized youths' spirits, to borrow from Bettina Love

(2019), to relegate their ontoepistemologies to the status of the living dead which can be mapped across the death worlds of schooling.

This book is also aligned with Puar's (2017) discussion on how states maintain the right to maim and, by extension, Berlant's (2007; 2011) dialogues on slow death. This book thinks through the spectrum of velocities through which educational necropolitics occur; from slow, normalized daily maiming to eruptions of violence that engender rapid change. Using curriculum theorizing as a foundation, here I argue that educational necropolitics is carried out across the forms of curriculum—formal, enacted, hidden, and null—to debilitate students' ways of being, knowing, and doing in order to assert and maintain control; both within the school and more broadly. This is akin to Puar's use of events and movements, such as those in Gaza, the "It Gets Better" project, and police-sanctioned murder of Black people to conceptualize how "debility"—through bodily injury or social exclusion—alongside disability and capacity, constitute an assemblage that states use to control populations. At the intersections of these ideas, Puar (2017) writes:

> Those "folded" into life are seen as more capacious or on the side of capacity, while those targeted for premature or slow death are figured as on the side of debility. Such an analysis reposes the question: Which bodies are made to pay for "progress"? Which debilitated bodies can be reinvigorated for neoliberalism, available and valuable enough for rehabilitation, and which cannot be?
>
> *(p. 3)*

It has been well established that schools are cites of cultural reproduction, making Puar's salient questions central to conceptualizing how educational necropolitics are intra-connected to broader sociopolitical forms of exclusion, injury, and slow death. Educational necropolitics extends Puar's discussion on futurity and disability rights paradigms, along with her previous work on homonationalism, by considering two points. First, this book outlines how curricula engender and maintain ontoepistemological violence, rendering certain students disposable through schooling. Second, this book considers how the process of creating more equitable and accessible schools upholds the very structures that facilitated marginalization in the first place. One example that underscores this tension is equal rights to marriage, regardless of one's sexual orientation or gender identity. Although the right to participate in marriage is significant and has many legal implications, it still upholds Western notions of relationships, sexualities, and family norms. Marriage also allows the state to remain the arbiter of relationships, much in the way that it decides who to exclude for citizenship, healthcare, and other such rights.

Special education programs, even when applied in ways that foreground care, are an example of how inclusion still allows ableist norms to continue in schools. Given the disparity of students of color who are referred for accommodations,

an attention to how equity still upholds oppression is important. To be clear, this is not an argument that somehow defends systems of oppression, nor is it one that advocates for the removal of rights or tools minoritized people use to create and sustain equitable spaces. This is also not an exercise in futility. Rather, this is an attention to abolitionist pedagogies, practices, and possibilities within fields of education as a way to consider which tools one might use to dismantle the master's house (Lorde, 1983; Love, 2019).

In considering how youth suffer unconscionable ontoepistemological violence through schooling, I return to my questions about agency and power. Just like there is no outside of power, there is no outside of agency. This statement is not an attempt to disregard the agentic contingencies (Wozolek, 2021a), or the circumstances that limit a person's ability to enact agency, that one might encounter. Rather, it draws attention to the brave steps one often must take to enact agency as a form of resistance within oppressive systems (Durisin et al., 2018), frequently despite limiting agentic contingencies. Even when relegated to the state of the living dead, for example, agency is still present. Although Mbembe uses suicide as a form of agency against necropolitical control, here I explicate the kinds of agency available while living with and within structures that normalize educational choking and lynching for minoritized students in general but, especially, for Black, Indigenous, Students of Color (BISOC).

Deciding how to act in an untenable situation or despite barriers is difficult. Aligned with Moten's (2003) description of how silence has movement, a decision not to act, or to act despite consequences, is still a form of agency, regardless of the contingencies that force and funnel a person toward decisions that, to Puar's argument, maintain the status quo. Throughout this book, even in the face of ontoepistemological violence, I show how students still enact various forms of agency within and across systems. Social scientists have discussed the many ways that oppressed people and communities carve out spaces in violent places (e.g., Goffman, 1961; Sabzalian, 2019; Spivak, 1988; Tatum, 2003; Willis, 1977). Students of color at Milford High similarly found ways to enact agency even within the confinement of a system that was "designed for, populated by and controlled by" (Nespor, 1997, p. 91) ideas and ideals of whiteness.

As I considered questions of agency and power, I was deliberate in choosing a methodology for this study for several reasons. First, qualitative research, like many traditional forms of inquiry, is rooted in colonialist ways of being, knowing, and doing (Francis, 2016; Rahder, 2020; Smith, 2021). Given that I wanted to think with Black and brown youth in a predominantly white space, I needed to be transparent about the historical oppressions entrenched in research methodologies. As a researcher who often works with vulnerable populations, it is important to ensure that the research itself is not further marginalizing for participants. I therefore also used this study to think about voice and transparency, and how these might be addressed methodologically. Finally, as I re-engaged the data years

after its initial collection, I recognized how significant methodological choices can be in empowering youth when they feel heard, even in the most difficult contexts. Toward these ends, the next section will discuss the ethical implications of my approach: sonic ethnography.

"Did you hear that?": Deep Listening Through Sonic Ethnography

Javonte: So, Woz. When I record this shit, will you hear it? I mean, actually hear it? Or will you just hear it the way teachers and other adults hear it?

Wozolek: How do teachers and other adults hear the kinds of things you think you'll be recording?

Javonte: They hear it like, well, like adults who are trying to defend themselves. There's always a reason . . . a reason why we are wrong, and they are right. I'm just wondering if you'll actually be listening.

Sound politics dictate who, when, where, and which bodies are heard (Guilbault, 2007). In communities, sound ordinances are enforced disproportionately on Black and brown people (Stoever, 2016). In schools, sounds produced by students of color are often deemed "problems" at higher rates than those of their white peers (Morris, 2016), and the silencing of Black and brown youth is normalized (Carter Andrews & Gutwein, 2020). The interview excerpt at the beginning of this section reflects Javonte's concerns about being heard through my research. Javonte was a Black eleventh-grade student who, as he would later describe to me, was "always in trouble for sayin' something they didn't like." As I discuss in Chapter 1, several participants shared similar concerns, stating that they were unsure if I would "believe" them while articulating anxiety that recordings would somehow be used against them.

Gaslighting, or the act of manipulating someone to make them question their own voice, perspective, and ideas, was something that many students expressed experiencing at school. When seeking consent from participants, a biracial tenth grader, Jayda, explained that she was worried that I wouldn't "see her perspective" during the study. She went on to describe several times that she had reported racialized bullying to an administrator who consistently told her that she was likely "misinterpreting" what she had heard. Several other students explained that they too received disciplinary action when they spoke out about racialized violence in the school. James, for example, went to the administration to explain that a white student called him the N-word in the hallway. Because he did not have a pass when the incident occurred, he was told he had been breaking the school policy that students must have a valid note to be in the hall. While the administrator promised that the other child would be punished for his actions, James also received a detention for roaming the halls during instructional time. Students

were therefore apprehensive about the study in two ways: First, they were concerned I would not find them credible, and second, they worried that if the data indicated that they had broken school rules, they would be punished. I worked to take these concerns seriously throughout my research.

Sharing their concerns, my research methodology for this project grew from at least the following interrelated ideas. First, I was aware of how schools are designed to silence Black and brown youth. My attention to this phenomenon came not only from my personal experience as a queer brown woman who attended schools in the United States, but from years working as a teacher in urban, rural, and suburban contexts. Regardless of the context, I witnessed Black and brown student voices consistently devalued in ways that gaslit youth for sharing their experiences. I wanted to ensure that the methodology I used responded to normalized silencing in both theory and practice (Attali, 1977).

Second, this study's methodology was heavily influenced by my time thinking with Walter Gershon, whose scholarship at the intersections of sound and education shaped not only this work but has been a driving force behind the development of sonic ethnography across fields of education and qualitative research. It is therefore important to pause and recognize that as scholars we stand on methodological and theoretical grounds paved by our fore-folx; many of whom fought hard to have the ability to simply lay the foundation on which we build our work. It is therefore my opinion that scholars should be intentional about recognizing, and not silencing, the legacy of our mentors. While this manuscript is one of the first book-length sonic ethnographic studies published, it would not have been possible without Gershon's scholarship and personal guidance. While I frequently use sonic ethnography as a method, it is not a concept I designed. Rather, it is a pre-existing symphony to which I now contribute. Our dialogues over time have therefore been invaluable to unpacking the normalized silencing that happens in schools and, to my first point, how I might use methodological approaches as a tool to disrupt such silencing.

Third, I was cognizant of the broader qualitative research context where, despite changes in technology and challenges to traditional data collection, the field continues to wrestle with questions of voice, transparency, and representation (e.g., Behar, 1996; Geertz, 1973; Gershon, 2017). Finally, like any strong researcher, I attended closely to ethical considerations. In particular, I thought about how the academic requirements many participants faced intersected with their personal and familial responsibilities. I was also aware of the emotional labor that is often involved when reliving trauma (Goessling, 2020) through story telling. I used voice recording devices as one way to attend to these considerations. This provided a space for students to reflect privately, in groups, with me, and, with the recorders off, with mental health professionals when necessary.

Hearing these considerations as they reverberated across the study design, I decided to engage in sonic ethnography. As the name suggests, sonic ethnography resides at the intersections of ethnographic methodologies (Agar, 1996; Geertz, 1973;

Gottlieb & Graham, 1994) and sound studies (Erlmann, 2004; Schafer, 1969; Sterne, 2012; Stoever, 2016). Through sonic ethnography, I was able to trace how sound—much like the movements of ordinary affects—travels between bodies, times, memories, histories, spaces, and places (Siddall & Waterman, 2016; Steingo & Sykes 2019). I used traditional and contemporary ethnographic methods for data collection and analysis (e.g., Agar, 1996; Erickson, 1986; Page, 2006), but with an emphasis on sound(ed) understandings and representations of data (Ferrarini & Scaldaferri, 2020; Gershon, 2017). Practically speaking, this sonic ethnography is the product of a two-year research study at one site, Milford High, where I thought with fifty-three participants about the school and broader systems of schooling. As I will describe in detail, students worked on several sonic and visual mapping projects to help me garner a sounded cartography of their lives.

My decision to work ethnographically was also intentional. First, as I detail further in Chapter 1, I was already acquainted with the context from which this data was drawn. However, knowing the complexities of being a teacher-researcher, I wanted to give the students and the school time to adjust to my dual roles. Second, I wanted to think collaboratively with participants about how sonic data was collected and conveyed to broader audiences. Given the tension between students' desire to be heard as it was met with their apprehensions about how what they said would be received, I knew that these concerns could be addressed over time. Trust and respect are earned and, as one might imagine, this process is often not immediate; allowing for this time is a central component of thinking ethnographically. Third, I wanted this project to reflect the students' sensuous lives (Feld, 2012; Stoller, 1997) and therefore wanted to collect both visual and sonic artifacts (Schulze, 2018) that represented their experiences. Finally, ethnographic research has a history of marginalizing practices, or what some anthropologists have discussed as a colonial matrix of power (e.g., Mignolo & Escobar, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Schulze, 2020). Recognizing the relation between marginalization and anthropology is important to interrupting oppressive norms across research methodologies, dialogues, and institutional spaces. It is also significant to note the work of contemporary researchers as they continue to consider how ethnographic methods might be used to interrupt, rather than add to, forms of oppression (e.g., Geertz, 1973; Lassiter, 2010; Lather, 1986; Rahder, 2020; Rosaldo, 1993).

Using a sonic approach enhanced my ethnographic project in important ways. Thinking sonically is, as Gershon (2017) argues, an important shift from a normalized emphasis on ocular data and representation. Shifting norms in a place like a school is significant, particularly for Black and brown students who rightly feel as though they are not heard. Toward these ends, the sound(ed) component to this research kept me focused me on what Pauline Oliveros (2005) calls "deep listening." Although Oliveros devotes significant time to a distinction between "hearing" and "listening"—a boundary that is contested within sound studies—here I focus on what the act of deep listening does rather than trying to parse

out the subtleties of active and passive engagement. Regardless of whether one considers hearing and listening as "active" or "passive," sounds are central to the human experience. For a hearing person,[4] attending to sound is inevitable as there is no "closing of an earlid" (Gershon, 2012b, p. 365) to the world. Through sonic ethnography, I found myself consistently reminded of the ongoing onslaught of violence students experienced, a reality towards which students always had one ear open.

Through the intimate connection to sound and sound(ed) experiences, Audra McCartney's (2016) question "How am I to listen to you?" (p. 54) became foregrounded in important ways that were elicited through sonic ethnographic work and deep listening. Although focused on soundwalking and improvisation, McCartney's inquiry considers an interpersonal ethics, what she describes as a space where each "subject must remain alert and open, [recognizing] that the future is not composed or prescribed . . . open to the possibilities of the moment" (p. 38). The omnidirectional transference McCartney describes was crucial to this project for many reasons. Aside from working with minoritized students who often felt silenced or unheard, sonic ethnography called for an intimacy in listening that was inherently active. By the time I began this research, I had already spent several years as a world language educator teaching students exactly what I had always learned—that listening is a passive skill while others (e.g., speaking or writing) are active skills. McCartney's dialogue is aligned with scholars who have studied contemporary forms of music like hip hop (Dimitriadis & Bae-Dimitriadis, 2009; Emdin, 2010; Love, 2017) that focus on listening as not only active but a kind of community-driven consciousness. Thinking with students through the methodological lens of sonic ethnography provided a space for me to challenge my pre-conceived notions about listening, asking me to "listen in new directions" (McCartney, 2016, p. 42) with a sense of intimacy and care that is often not centered in classrooms.

Additionally, sonic ethnography allowed me to think deeply about the emergent nature of sounds in relation to human and nonhuman bodies, cultures, affects, performances, and other aspects of a sonic life (Gershon, 2017; Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2012; Robinson, 2020; Sterne, 2012). Specifically, I seek a kind of transparency in my data collection and analysis in terms of the idea that everything is, to some degree, always misheard (Gershon, 2020). Returning to Javonte's quote at the beginning of this section, it is important to think about just how much both the speaker (Javonte) and the listener (perhaps teachers or administrators) filter what is said (a violent experience at school) and how that speech is received (with possibly implicit or explicit racial bias). Thinking and listening sonically recognizes the time delays inherently present in research (Erickson, 2004; Gershon, 2012a; McKittrick, 2021). This includes not only the time it takes for sounds to leave a producer and hit a receiver's body (Gershon, 2012a) but also, in an era of voice threads and videos, the often-longer lags between the production and reception of

sound. This is especially true in a research context like mine, which includes the use of recorders when the researcher might not be present.

Finally, an emphasis on sound means moving away from what Gershon (2020) discusses as questions of relevance and towards thinking about resonance. I reflexively engaged with participants to collectively consider resonance and reverberation. Returning to Javonte's interview, he expressed that while his narrative might not be relevant to administrators or teachers who were implicitly or explicitly concerned with keeping the status quo, his story was resonant to him and other students who shared similar experiences. As Gershon (2020) argues, "resonance suggests that any perspective is given the dignity of attention in that it (a) resonates with the person at that time and (b) for reasons they believe to be important" (p. 1163). However, it is possible to, as Gershon (2020) argues, give a "particular resonance to this dignity while also holding space for critique, disagreement, and rejection of expressed ideas" (p. 1164). During this study, while I heard perspectives that did not always resonate with me, I gave them the dignity of attention as I thought about how such perspectives circulated with broader sociocultural norms and values.

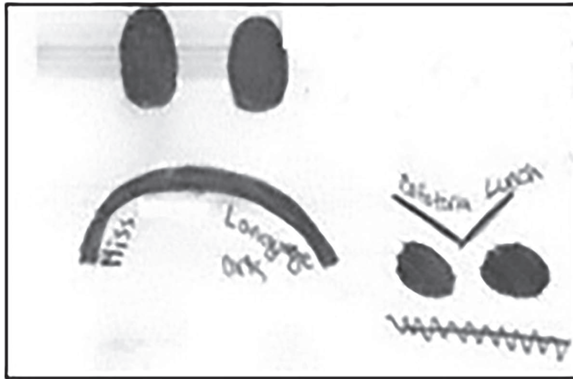
This argument also builds on Gershon's (2020) work that explicates reverberation as resonance in motion. As sounded bodies are in motion, like any fluid movement of ideas or affects, their reverberations are slippery, messy, and liminal. They are also never apolitical (Bull, 2019; Stoever, 2016) or without intention. Sonic ethnography as method foregrounds intention, attention, and expression within reverberations that are always already in-action (Schwab, 1969). Gershon (2020) writes that intention is often the most difficult of these interrelated notions, arguing that at "its core, intentionality matters because it is a means for those who are not the individual or the group involved in a given process to better follow what the producer(s) meant to do" (p. 1165). As students had multiple opportunities to record their perspectives—both in my presence through one-on-one and group interviews, and in my absence through a sonic mapping project and student-led interview sessions—intention mattered quite a bit as I worked to clarify not only the intent of the students' recordings after I listened to them, but also my intentions in asking for these recordings.

Intention is interrelated with attention and expression, which, as Gershon (2020) argues,

> [pertain] to what and how producers went about their intentions (to what did they pay attention when they did what they set out to do) and the ways in which audiences pay attention to producers' intentions and expressions (what did the producer intend to do and what informed those choices) . . . expression, then, is the outward release of something that is a result of producers' processes of intention and attention that are an open category.
>
> *(pp. 1165–1166)*

Thinking through each layer and scale of intention, attention, and expression—both separately and within their entangled parts—meant that I was positioned to be reflexive about how my actions as a researcher impacted youth while considering multiple ways that the environment reverberated against my ways of being, knowing, and doing. With these questions in mind, the next section explicates how I approached cartographies—both sonic and ocular—with intention, attention, and expression foregrounded.

Spaces of Learning: Engaging the Cartographies of School



Wozolek: Can you tell me about this part of your map?
Alisha: Yeah . . . that's the part of my map that shows just how much and when I hate it here the most. Can you see it? I don't know what it is about this place. It just works this way, I guess.

Critical geographers have theorized how space and place are sociopolitically produced (e.g., Harvey, 2009; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005), often resulting in violent inequities (e.g., Helfenbein & Huddleston, 2021; Soja, 2010; Zinn, 2017). Considering the multiplicity of space (Massey, 2005) and its violent intra-actions (Barad, 2007; Wozolek, 2021a) is important in schools because they are imbued with literal and metaphorical signs that dictate how space is to be used. One only needs to reflect on the spatial arrangements of classrooms as they shift between primary and secondary grades. In primary grades, desks tend to be placed in collaborative arrangements, while secondary students often enter rooms with desks in straight rows, facing the front of the room. Even seating arrangements, then, dictate the tone and tenor of a room. Moving outward to other places in school, one can consider the placement of classrooms for students with disabilities—often hidden away in a school building—making it clear how ideas about people with disabilities are formed and informed through space and place (Erevelles, 2011; Puar, 2017).

While space and place are deeply and inextricably entwined, critical geographers have differentiated between the two ideas in important ways (e.g., Massey, 2005; Tuan, 1977). Although what constitutes space or place can be contested, for the purposes of this book, place refers to physical location that is imbued with collective memory (Winfield, 2007), or how groups remember their past, while space is less about physical locality and instead refers to relations between bodies. In terms of place, collective memory is often hard to name, in that different groups can remember histories differently. In the United States, the current debate around critical race theory as a corrective historical lens offers an example of how collective memories can differ across and between groups. Places, therefore, do not have a single identity but reside in fluid multiplicity (Massey, 2005), with no "observable boundaries besides a visible expression of a specific time period" (Tuan, 1977, p. 6).

Space similarly exists in multiplicity; it is both a material and an abstract concept that is central to our ways of being, knowing, and doing through what Doreen Massey (2013) describes as a "pincushion of a million stories" (n.p.). Space cuts across times, perspectives, and narratives, presenting us with sociopolitical questions about how space reverberates across contexts. The emphasis on relationships between space and place allow us to think deeply about power and agency for the bodies within these contexts. Attention to space and place through critical geography allows for a certain kind of reimagining. Mapping offers fertile ground to interrogate how boundaries and borders are sociopolitically constructed, questioning the relationship between how one draws and reads a map (Helfenbein & Huddleston, 2021; Soja, 2010; Williams, 1988).

Before I continue with how sonic and visual maps were used in this study, I feel it is important to again pause and note that while the maps produced in this study happened rather organically with participants, sonic and visual mapping as a methodological tool was a cartography traced well before the onset of this study. Like many scholars, it was conversations with mentors in the field, like Kimberly Powell (2019), Robert Helfenbein (2021), and Walter Gershon (2013a), who encouraged me to think about space and place as I have theoretically and practically applied it in my career. Within these communities, I was encouraged toward the work of scholars like Jan Nespor (1997), Michael Gallagher and Jonathan Prior (2017), Katherine McKittrick (2006), Edward Soja (2010), Doreen Massey (2005), Katharine Harmon (2009), among others, who have shaped not only my scholarship but the field more broadly.

Before beginning mapping projects, I held several discussions in small groups with participants about maps. Themes ranged from who has the power to put images on a map to what maps tell us about a space, what can be learned from the places depicted on maps, what is absent from them, and, significantly, what students would like represented in their maps. Then, participants were asked to sonically map their space while carrying a recorder. They were given only one prompt: Tell me anything you want to about school.

Practically speaking, I purchased recorders that did not have the strongest microphones. This was done intentionally so that, for recordings to be heard, students needed to hold them out in the open. While I had been given site permission by the superintendent, curriculum director, and every administrator in the building, and gained consent from every audible voice in the recordings I collected, I did not want the fact that recordings were happening to be a "surprise" for anyone in the area. This was, after all, research and not journalism. Students were also asked to create visual school maps. Per our conversations, I was open to any representation they provided. Again, I gave them only the guiding prompt: Create a visual map for the school that shows others what you feel is important about the building and/or your school day.

There are many ways to think about mapping, from concept maps that elicit a visual representation of historical, current, and future ideas (Novak & Gowin, 1984), to cognitive maps that evoke the mutually constituted nature of relationships (Lynch, 1960), to maps as personal geographies (Harmon, 2009), to political mapping (Gordon, 2008), to artistic mapping of spaces (Powell, 2010), and the like. The purpose of offering multiple forms of mapping to participants was twofold: to think with students about the politics of mapping and to give them multiple outlets through which they could create their school cartographies. As will become obvious throughout this book, students spent a considerable amount of time mapping what they learned in school. I therefore briefly discuss different kinds of curriculum that emerged from these projects before concluding to provide some clarity on how lessons in anti-blackness were formed in various curricular spaces.

Curricular Violence: Unpacking the Forms of Curriculum

María: Black people get slavery or Civil Rights—in chains or breaking them. And that's not enough. I get that. I'm not sayin' it's not. But I wonder, what do we get? When do you learn about us? Never. We're not even in the text, aside from *maybe* the Alamo. Even then, it's like a paragraph. You know how much of this country was Mexico? Yet we don't have a place. Not in music. Or art. Or history. Not anywhere.

Students frequently used the mapping projects as a way to talk about the inequities in schooling. One common thread from the maps focused on how normalized racism functioned to make school "work [a particular] way." Often, students were referring to the implicit and explicit forms of racism that were normalized through the culture of the school. To María's point above, there are always several forms of curriculum at work that (re)produce presences and absences across systems of schooling. Molly Quinn (2010) articulated that the curriculum, and more broadly the field of curriculum studies, remains haunted by those who have been

left out, the strangers present in the everyday interactions of schooling. Whereas the past narratives of these strangers are often obfuscated by a cultural historical amnesia (Hall, 1997), it is important to remember that past and present experiences do not function in isolation (Berry, 2010). What "was" is deeply entwined with what "is," generating and supporting the structures of schooling that students of color are left to negotiate as the normalized strangers in education (Cooper, 1892; Rist, 1973; Woodson, 1933).

Contextualized and layered by a group's collective memory (Winfield, 2007), the multiple, knotted interactions nested in schools (Nespor, 1997) are central to school culture. As is the case in all structures, how a group remembers the process of, and participants in, the construction of that structure is significant to how systems of power are perceived and maintained (Barad, 2017; Dillard, 2021). I conceptualize "structure" here in two ways. It is both the physical building designed to house and control education (Noguera, 2003), and, as primarily used here, it is the underlying organization that drives school culture and disseminates knowledge in both implicit and explicit ways (Apple, 1993; Du Bois, 1903; Rist, 1973; Winfield, 2007; Woodson, 1933). Structural analysis of violence places violence within an assemblage, rather than viewing it as an isolated event.

Within the structure of schooling, four forms of curriculum—formal, hidden, enacted, and null—are central to how inequities are maintained. It is of utmost importance to attend to the forms of curriculum as they are tangled up in schools (Nespor, 1997). Although the field of curriculum studies and the work of curriculum theorizing are clear about how these forms of curriculum are significant to local and less-local norms and values, educators and administrators tend to think critically about the formal curriculum while relegating the other forms of curriculum to a theoretical conversation that is often absent from conversations about schools and systems of schooling. Curricular knots often serve to unintentionally suffocate marginalized students' ways of being, knowing, and doing. María's point about the limited contact that students have with Black and brown voices—"slavery *or* Civil Rights"—is an articulation of the formal curriculum, or the prescribed knowledge that students are supposed to gain in school (Pinar et al., 1995). In the context of Milford High, as is in many U.S. schools, the sum of African American life in the United States tends to be narrowed to discussions of enslavement and the Civil Rights Movement, while other racial minorities are not just understudied but entirely absent from the formal curriculum. To be clear, like María, I do not mean this as a direct comparison. Access to representation in the formal curriculum should not be doled out like pie—with someone losing a piece for every new voice heard. Rather, I draw attention to the stark absences that are present in the formal curriculum to think about how sociohistorical narratives are impossibly entwined through corrective curricular conversations.

In addition to how blackness was viewed through a narrow lens, when discussing slavery, the enslaved often remained nameless in the curriculum. Only an example or two of those who escaped enslavement and become abolitionists, like

Frederick Douglass, were among the names heard in the formal curriculum. The Civil Rights Movement coverage at Milford focused only on a few activists, such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, skipping over the dynamics of multiple positions across liberatory ideologies. This brings us to the null curriculum, or the content that is implicitly and explicitly not taught to students (Eisner, 1985), in this case the names notably absent from lessons, like Daisy Bates, Frederick D. Reese, Marcus Garvey, Sally Hemmings, William Harvey Carney, Ruby Bridges, Julian Bond, or Malcolm X. Even in representation, then, there is often little room given to voice and perspective. Studying Black and brown contributions to society through a limited perspective is also central to the hidden curriculum (Giroux & Penna, 1983; Jackson, 1968), or the norms and values that are hidden to those participating in a school's culture. The racialized formal curriculum and the absent voices in the null curriculum therefore "exacerbate the operation and effects of the 'hidden curriculum'" (Page, 2006, p. 52).

These forms of curriculum are always, as Schwab (1969) argued, in-action. The enacted curriculum (Page, 2006) is a way to trace the emergent lessons that happen between students, teachers, administration, the places and spaces of school, and the other forms of curriculum. The enacted curriculum therefore resides across contexts in a school, spilling into the intra-actions between students and community. Because pedagogies of injustice are taught across these curricula, they affect not only students of color but, notably, the ontoepistemologies of white students as well. When Woodson (1933) wrote that there would be no lynching if it did not start in the schoolroom, he referred not only to what students like María might or might not learn through the formal and null curricula, but also to the many ways that curricular spaces are created to promote racialized violence through hidden and enacted ones.

Educational necropolitics is therefore ubiquitous across the forms of curriculum. Students' ways of being, knowing, and doing were murdered, to borrow from Love (2019), through every intra-action in school, from what they learned in texts to what they gleaned from human and nonhuman relations. This book will show that the multiplicity of inroads to being/becoming the living dead as produced by schooling and all actors central to education is like trying to parse every individual drop of water from the ocean. Trying to reduce necropolitical control in education to one drop ignores the weight, histories, compositions, and power of an ocean and, ultimately, its relationship to bodies of water across the globe.

Conclusion: Woodson is Still on Point

This book considers what it means to be a Black or brown student in an overwhelmingly white school in a contemporary U.S. context and the necropolitical impacts of that position. This is incredibly significant because, despite growing diversity in schools, teacher and administrator demographics remain largely white

and the formal curriculum also leans toward white, cishetero knowledges (Solic & Riley, 2019). The focus of this book is not necessarily the broader community context. However, as police violence disproportionately impacts communities of color, as Black and brown youth continue to face higher rates of incarceration than their white peers, and as the rise of white supremacist ideologies continues to violently erupt in places like Buffalo, Charleston, El Paso, Indiana, Florida, and other places and spaces across the nation, it is important to consider not only how such ideologies are in circulation within schools but also how they spill over into communities in violent ways.

Schools are, in many ways, gnarled, knotted, and messy places. The structure of this book attends to this nested nature in an attempt to explicate the complicated realities of schools and systems of schooling. Chapter 1 explores the context of Milford High School, the implementation of sonic ethnography in this study, and my complex role as a researcher. The sounded nature of this book is introduced in Chapter 1. It is important for readers to know that there are several ways to access the sounds in this book. At the start of each chapter that includes sounds, readers will find a QR code that links directly to chapter specific sound files. For readers with electronic copies, the sounds are hyperlinked in the text. This is meant as a deliberate interruption of the text, a moment to pause from a traditional, ocular engagement with the book and engage in deep listening with the voices and perspectives of participants and broader ideas. Finally, each hyperlinked portion of the text has a corresponding endnote for readers to access the full links.

Chapter 1 therefore represents the non-traditional complications of this book while attending one of the many ways that researchers often discuss a context, describing the forest before delving into the nature of individual trees. Chapter 1 also explains my inroad to thinking with Black and brown youth as casual conversations about racism shifted to an intentional research project. During this moment of transition, I thought with students who called themselves "The Crew" about what they had named a "war of the half-breeds" that was brewing in the school.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are, as much as the format of a traditional book will allow, nested within one another. This is marked in the text by the inclusion of references only at the end of nested sections, rather than given between each section, as might be seen in more traditional formats. The overarching theme attends to the cartographies that were formed and informed within and across Milford High. These chapters work serve as bookends, underscoring the beginning and end of the day for students of color at Milford. Working chronologically but recognizing the entangled nature of spaces, Chapter 2 describes how students negotiate the beginning of the school day, just prior to their first classes. Chapter 2 introduces the concept of "Little Africa," a place that students, faculty, and administration alike labeled where students of color congregated in the building. Emphasizing the enacted curriculum, this chapter describes tensions of ordinary affects that are often embodied within the negotiations of sociocultural contexts.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on how students negotiate the end of the day, just prior to and after the closing bell. Chapter 3 explicates how cultural capital is too often entangled with what I have named capital of shame. For example, at Milford athletic capital offers some insight into how both traditional conceptualizations of cultural capital and capitals of shame work simultaneously to engender social and physical wiggle room while maintaining a space where shame centered on athletics prevented other students from garnering social mobility. This chapter shows how shame travels with intentionality in, across, and between groups in ways that formed and informed individual and group agency.

It should be noted that while Chapter 3 focuses on how young men of color wrestle with these ideals as they are related to aspects of student life like academics and athletics, Chapter 4 focuses on how young women of color negotiated the end of the day. To be clear, this is not an attempt to reinforce gender binaries. The division of perceived genders aligns with how participants identified themselves, with none of the students outwardly identifying with gender identities outside of cisgender norms of gender identity. However, as is detailed at the beginning of Chapter 4, students of color were rather intentional about describing how they were split among in-group dynamics, with one of the most prominent splits existing along the lines of gender.

Chapter 4 explains the pressures that young women of color faced in different yet parallel race-based themes considered in Chapter 3. For example, young men of color felt disproportionately targeted for particular punishments, like detentions and suspensions, consistent with scholarship on the school-to-prison pipeline. Young women of color felt more targeted for infractions like breaking the dress code or being vocally disruptive or "loud." Chapter 4 concludes with a dialogue on the hidden curriculum and how students carved out spaces to just "be" against oppressive formal or hidden curricula of the corridors. This chapter describes how the place known as "Little Africa" functions as a space within the underlife of the institution where students can relax into the group, even if only for a moment. This is no small accomplishment and the agency discussed in this chapter argues that students often have their own formal curriculum that is enacted against the boundaries and borders of other raced and racist curricula that exist in schools.

Chapter 5 serves as a brief interlude to the dialogue on schooling. Similar to musical understandings of an interlude, the purpose of Chapter 5 is to provide a break in the rhythm of the book, a transition between the discussion present in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, which focused on the curriculum of the corridor, to the oppressive and violent curricula present in classrooms. This chapter engages a complicated conversation on memory. The purpose for inserting this dialogue at this juncture is also because students were clear that teachers and administrators placed a certain emphasis on memory in classroom spaces—to remember the formal curriculum, remembering what happened when there were disputes, and re-membering who they were in the broader system of schooling.

Chapter 6 and 7 are another set of imbrications that emphasize academic spaces. Building on Chapter 5's dialogue on memory, Chapter 6 explicates how historical amnesia and cultural memory permitted racist events. These forms of memory are often forms of gaslighting, isolating students from both the current cultural context as well as broader sociopolitical histories. The curricula heard in this chapter through students' narratives are waves of oppression, resounding within the echo chambers of school, shaping how people and groups are re-membered.

Chapter 7 attends to the precarious nature of safe spaces. Turning from how students' anxiety necessitated the creation of safe spaces and places, this focuses on how students traversed educational boundaries and borders. How one negotiates, makes sense of, and orders their world is a knotted process that is layered with social norms, personal identities, values, and the like. At Milford High, there was a price to pay for the creation of and participation in safe spaces. These (in)voluntary roles that students had as described in this chapter pushed students onto the discipline ladder. Detailing the ontoepistemological death and dying that is central to educational necropolitics, this chapter argues that the price students paid for being in school was far greater than any price they paid for their (re)creation of and participation in safe spaces, like Little Africa.

Folding Chapters 1 through 7 together, Chapter 8 thinks critically about cultural capital as it is distributed across questions of shame and performances of self within and across school culture. At Milford High School, students of color negotiated the spaces and places of a predominantly white school through performances of self that were directly related to predetermined social ontologies, understandings that were in turn constructed through sociocultural norms and values. These performances were layers of protection that students of color used to help them negotiate a school that was, at best, restrictive, but more generally untenable for their ways of being and knowing.

Finally, Chapter 9 returns to the idea of educational necropolitics through ontoepistemological choking and lynching, which is evident throughout the data. By paying attention to racialized curricula within necropolitical norms, the material consequences of these curricula for students becomes clear. To return once more to Sid's dialogue at the beginning of this chapter, this book explores how, in a contemporary context, Black youth become the strange fruit of schools.

Notes

1 All names of people, schools, student groups, or other identifying information have been replaced with pseudonyms.

2 How schools funnel youth into the prison system remains a serious concern and will be taken up throughout this book. While many people describe the school-to-prison pipeline as one reason why Black and brown youth face high rates of incarceration as adults, in some cities it can be argued that there is no "pipeline," because schools already function like the prison system, complete with a large police presence. For example, New

York Police Department's School Safety Division houses the "fifth largest police force in the country—larger than the police forces of Washington D.C., Detroit, Boston, or Los Vegas" (New York American Civil Liberties Union, 2021, para. 2). The complexity of a "pipeline" versus a policed school system are present in my data and analysis in ways that are not reducible to a catch-all phrase like the school-to-prison pipeline. Similarly, as I explore ontological death through schools, it can be argued that no pipeline need exist when the closed system already engenders and maintains such death.

3 As Chapter 2 will discuss in detail, it is important to note that resistance and refusal are not synonymous. The ability to resist and/or refuse systems of oppression are as much about privilege and power as they are about agency. Attending to who has the available wiggle room to resist or refuse systems, how they can carry this out, and when are significant not only to the experiences of the youth captured in this book but to broader sociopolitical norms and values.

4 It is important to remember that all scholarly work can be marginalizing—from where it can be read (often expensive journals or books, inaccessible to many people) to where it can be heard (often at conferences that are equally inaccessible to people both in and outside of academia). This book is no different. While I work to include sound, something that is often not available for people with visual disabilities, I recognize the inherently marginalizing quality the representation of this data might have for people with hearing disabilities.

Bibliography

Agar, M. H. (1996). *The professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography* (2nd ed.). Academic Press.

Ahmed, S. (2010). Happy objects. In M. Gregg & J. Seigworth (Eds.), *The affect theory reader* (pp. 29–52). Duke University Press.

Alexander, M. (2012). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness.* The New Press.

Apple, M. W. (Ed.). (1982). *Cultural and economic reproduction in education*. Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (1993). The politics of official knowledge: Does a national curriculum make sense? *Teachers College Record, 95*(2), 222–241.

Attali, J. (1977). *Noise: The political economy of music.* Minnesota Press.

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.

Barad, K. (2017). Troubling time/s and ecologies of nothingness: Re-turning, re-membering, and facing the incalculable. *New Formations*, *92*(92), 56–86.

Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Beacon Press.

Benson, T. A., Salas, S., & Siefert, B. (2020). Irreconcilable differences: Black teachers' lives and K–12 schools. *The Urban Review*, *52*(4), 1–22.

Berlant, L. (2007). Slow death (sovereignty, obesity, lateral agency). *Critical Inquiry*, *33*(4), 754–780.

Berlant, L. (2011). Cruel optimism. In *Cruel Optimism*. Duke University Press.

Berry, T. R. (2010). Response to LaVada Brandon: Honoring our founders, respecting our contemporaries: In the words of a critical race, feminist curriculum theorist. In E. Malewski (Ed.), *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment* (pp. 138–141). Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice.* Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural production*. Polity Press.

Brooks, J. S., & Normore, A. H. (2017). *Foundations of educational leadership: Developing excellent and equitable schools*. Routledge.

Bull, M. (2001). Soundscapes of the car: A critical study of automobile habitation. In D. Miller (Ed.), *Car cultures* (pp. 185–202). Berg.

Bull, M. (Ed.). (2019). *The Routledge companion to sound studies*. Routledge.

Carter Andrews, D. J., & Gutwein, M. (2020). Middle school students' experiences with inequitable discipline practices in school: The elusive quest for cultural responsiveness. *Middle School Journal*, *51*(1), 29–38.

Cooper, A. J. (1892). *A voice from the South, by a Black woman from the South*. University of North Carolina Press.

DeLanda, M. (2016). *Assemblage theory*. Edinburgh University Press.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1983). *Anti-oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press.

Dillard, C. (2021). *The spirit of our work: Black women teachers (re)member.* Beacon Press.

Dimitriadis, G., & Bae-Dimitriadis, M. (2009). *Performing identity/performing culture: Hip hop as text, pedagogy, and lived practice*. Peter Lang.

Douglass, F. (1845). *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave.* Anti-slavery Office.

Driskill, Q. L. (Ed.). (2011). *Queer Indigenous studies: Critical interventions in theory, politics, and literature*. University of Arizona Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1926). Criteria of negro art. *The Crisis, 32*(1), 290–297.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of Black folk.* McClurgand.

Durisin, E. M., Van der Meulen, E., & Bruckert, C. (Eds.). (2018). *Red light labour: Sex work regulation, agency, and resistance*. University of British Columbia Press.

Eisner, E. (1985). The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs. Macmillan.

Emdin, C. (2010). *Urban science education for the hip-hop generation*. Brill.

Erevelles, N. (2011). *Disability and difference in global contexts: Enabling a transformative body politic*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 119–161). Macmillan.

Erickson, F. (2004). *Talk and social theory: Ecologies of speaking and learning in everyday life*. Polity.

Erlmann, V. (Ed.). (2004). *Hearing cultures: Essays on sound, listening and modernity*. Routledge.

Evans-Winters, V. E. (2017). Necropolitics and education. In G. Sirrakos Jr. & C. Emdin (Eds.) *Between the world and the urban classroom* (pp. 19–33). Brill.

Farinde-Wu, A., Butler, B. R., & Allen-Handy, A. (2020). Conceptualizing a Black female teacher pipeline: From recruitment to retention to retirement. *Theory Into Practice*, *59*(4), 337–347.

Feld, S. (2012). *Sound and sentiment: Birds, weeping, poetics, and song in Kaluli expression* (3rd ed.; 30th anniv. ed.). Duke University Press.

Ferrarini, L., & Scaldaferri, N. (2020). *Sonic ethnography: Identity, heritage and creative research practice in Basilicata, southern Italy*. Manchester University Press.

Francis, D. A. (2016). *Troubling the teaching and learning of gender and sexuality diversity in South African education*. Springer.

Foucault, M. (1978). The history of sexuality: The will to knowledge. Penguin.

Gallagher, M., & Prior, J. (2017). Listening walks: A method of multiplicity. In C. Bates & A. Rhys-Taylor (Eds.), *Walking through social research* (pp. 163–177). Routledge.

García, E. (2020). Schools are still segregated, and Black children are paying a price. *Economic Policy Institute Report*. Retrieved from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED603475.pdf

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretations of cultures*. Basic Books.

Gershon, W. S. (2012a). Sonic ethnography as method and in practice. *Anthropology News*, *53*(5), 5–12.

Gershon, W. S. (2012b). Troubling notions of risk: Dissensus, dissonance, and making sense of students and learning. *Critical Studies in Education, 53*(3), 361–373.

Gershon, W. S. (2013a). Sonic cartography: Mapping space, place, race, and identity in an urban middle school. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, *13*(1), 4.

Gershon, W. S. (2013b). Vibrational affect: Sound theory and practice in qualitative research. *Cultural Studies <> Critical Methodologies*, *13*(4), 257–262.

Gershon, W. S. (2017). *Sound curriculum: Sonic studies in educational theory, method, & practice*. Routledge.

Gershon, W. S. (2020). Reverberations and reverb: Sound possibilities for narrative, creativity, and critique. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *26*(10), 1163–1173.

Gershon, W.S. (in press). Getting schooled: A curriculum of lying, choking, and dying. In B. Wozolek (Ed.), *Black lives matter in US schools: Race, resistance, and resilience* (pp. 125–140). SUNY Press.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration.* University of California Press.

Gilroy, P. (2000). *Against race: Imagining political culture beyond the color line*. Harvard University Press.

Giroux, H., & Penna, A. (Eds.). (1983). *The hidden curriculum and moral education.* McCutchan.

Glissant, E. (1986). *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays.* Trans. J. Michael Dash. Caraf Books.

Goessling, K. P. (2020). Youth participatory action research, trauma, and the arts: Designing youthspaces for equity and healing. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *33*(1), 12–31.

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates.* Doubleday.

Goldman, H. H., Frank, R. G., & Morrissey, J. P. (Eds.). (2020). *The Palgrave handbook of American mental health policy.* Springer.

Gordon, A. (2008). An atlas of radical cartography. *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press*.

Gottlieb, A., & Graham, P. (1994). *Parallel worlds: An anthropologist and a writer encounter Africa*. University of Chicago Press.

Guilbault, J. (2007). *Governing sound: The cultural politics of Trinidad's carnival musics*. University of Chicago Press.

Gumbs, A. P. (2016). *Spill: Scenes of Black feminist fugitivity.* Duke University.

Hall, S. (1997). The local and the global: Globalization and ethnicity. In A. MacClintock, A.R. Mufti, & E. Shohat (Eds.), *Dangerous liaisons: Gender, nations, and postcolonial perspectives* (pp. 173–187). University of Minnesota Press.

Harmon, K. (Ed.). (2009). *The map as art: Contemporary artists explore cartography*. Princeton Architectural Press.

Harvey, D. (2009). *Social justice and the city.* The University of Georgia.

Helfenbein, R. J. (2010). Thinking through scale: Critical geographies and curriculum spaces. In E. Malewski (Ed.), *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment* (pp. 304–317). Routledge.

Helfenbein, R. (2021). *Critical geographies of education: Space, place, and curriculum inquiry.* Routledge.

Helfenbein, R., & Huddleston, G. (2021). Curriculum studies, critical geography, and critical spatial theory. In In G. Noblit (Ed.), *Oxford research encyclopedia of education* (pp. 30–35). Oxford Press.

Hsu, A., Sheriff, G., Chakraborty, T., & Manya, D. (2021). Disproportionate exposure to urban heat island intensity across major US cities. *Nature Communications*, *12*(1), 1–11.

Jackson, P.W. (1968). *Life in classrooms.* Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Kern, L. (2020). *Feminist city: Claiming space in a man-made world.* Verso.

King, L. (2020). *Perspectives on Black histories in schools.* Information Age Press.

Kuntz, A. M. (2019). *Qualitative inquiry, cartography, and the promise of material change.* Routledge.

Lassiter, L. E. (2010). *The Chicago guide to collaborative ethnography.* University of Chicago Press.

Lather, P. (1986). Issues of validity in openly ideological research: Between a rock and a soft place. *Interchange, 17*(4), 63–84.

Laura, C. T. (2014). *Being bad: My baby brother and the school-to-prison pipeline*. Teachers College Press.

Lebron, C. J. (2017). *The making of Black Lives Matter: A brief history of an idea*. Oxford University Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space.* Blackwell.

Lorde, A. (1983). The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. In C. Moraga & G. Anzaldúa (Eds.), *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color* (pp. 94–101). Kitchen Table Press.

Love, B. L. (2017). A ratchet lens: Black queer youth, agency, hip hop, and the Black ratchet imagination. *Educational Researcher*, *46*(9), 539–547.

Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom.* Beacon Press.

Lynch, K. (1960). *The image of the city.* MIT Press.

Mallett, C. A. (2015). *The school-to-prison pipeline: A comprehensive assessment*. Springer Publishing Company.

Massey, D. (2005). *For space*. Sage.

Massey, D. (2013). Space. *Social Science Bites.* Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Quj4tjbTPxw

Mbembe, J. A. (2003). Necropolitics. *Public culture*, *15*(1), 11–40.

Mbembe, A. (2019). *Necropolitics*. Duke University Press.

McCartney, A. (2016). "How am I to listen to you?": Soundwalking, intimacy, and improvised listening. In G. Sidall & E. Waterman (Eds.), *Negotiated moments: Improvisation, sound, and subjectivity* (pp. 37–54). Duke University Press.

McKittrick, K. (2006). *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle.* Duke University Press.

McKittrick, K. (2021). *Dear science and other stories.* Duke University Press.

Mignolo, W. D., & Escobar, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Globalization and the decolonial option.* Routledge.

Mills, C. W. (1997). *The racial contract*. Cornell University Press.

Morris, M. (2016). *Pushout: The criminalization of Black girls in schools.* The New Press.

Moten, F. (2003). *In the break: The aesthetics of the black radical tradition*. University of Minnesota Press.

Neal-Jackson, A. (2018). A meta-ethnographic review of the experiences of African American girls and young women in K–12 education. *Review of Educational Research*, *88*(4), 508–546.

Nespor, J. (1997). *Tangled up in school: Politics, space, bodies and signs in the educational process.* Lawrence Erlbaum.

New York American Civil Liberties Union. (2021). *School to prison pipeline.* Retrieved from: https://www.nyclu.org/en/look-school-safety

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2013). *Coloniality of power in postcolonial Africa.* African Books Collective.

Noguera, P. A. (2003). Schools, prisons, and social implications of punishment: Rethinking disciplinary practices. *Theory into Practice, 42*(4), 341–350.

Novak, J. D., & Gowin, D. B. (1984). *Learning how to learn.* Cambridge University Press.

Oliveros, P. (2005). *Deep listening: A composer's sound practice.* IUniverse.

Ortner, S. B. (2006). *Anthropology and social theory: Culture, power and the acting subject.* Duke University Press.

Page, R. (2006). Curriculum matters. In D. T. Hansen (Ed.), *John Dewey and our educational perspective: A critical engagement with Dewey's democracy and education* (pp. 39–66). University of New York Press.

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world.* Teachers College Press.

Pinar, W. F., Reynolds, R., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. (Eds.). (1995). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses.* Peter Lang.

Pinch, T., & Bijsterveld, K. (Eds.). (2012). *The Oxford handbook of sound studies.* Oxford University Press.

Powell, K. (2010). Making sense of place: Mapping as a multisensory research method. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(7), 539–555.

Powell, K. (2019). Walking as precarious public pedagogy. *Journal of Public Pedagogies, 4*(1), 191–202.

Puar, J. K. (2017). *The right to maim: Debility, capacity, disability.* Duke University Press.

Quinn, M. (2010). "No room in the inn"?: The question of hospitality in the post(partum)-labors of curriculum studies. In E. Malewski (Ed.), *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment* (pp. 101–117). Routledge.

Rahder, M. (2020). *An ecology of knowledges.* Duke University Press.

Ríos, F., & Longoria, A. (2021). *Creating a home in schools: Sustaining identities for Black, indigenous, and teachers of color.* Teachers College Press.

Rist, R. (1973). *The urban school: A factory for failure.* MIT Press.

Robinson, D. (2020). *Hungry listening: Resonant theory for indigenous sound studies.* University of Minnesota Press.

Rosaldo, R. (1993). *Culture & truth: The remaking of social analysis.* Beacon Press.

Rosiek, J. L. (2018). Agential realism and educational ethnography. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. Marques da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education* (pp. 403–423). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Rothstein, R. (2018). *The color of law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America.* Liveright.

Sabzalian, L. (2019). *Indigenous children's survivance in public schools.* Routledge.

Seigworth, G. J. & Gregg, M. (2010). An inventory of shimmers. In M. Gregg & G. J. Seigworth (Eds.), *The affect theory reader* (pp. 1–28). Duke University Press.

Schafer, R. M. (1969). *The new soundscape.* BMI Canada Limited.

Schatzki, T. (2002). *The site of the social: A philosophical account of the constitution of social life and change.* Penn State University Press.

Schulze, H. (2018). *The sonic persona: An anthropology of sound.* Bloomsbury Publishing.

Schulze, H. (Ed.). (2020). *The Bloomsbury handbook of the anthropology of sound.* Bloomsbury.

Schwab, J. J. (1969). The practical: A language for curriculum. *The School Review, 78*(1), 1–24.
Scott, J. (1990). *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts.* Yale University Press.
Sheldon, J. (2017). Problematizing reflexivity, validity, and disclosure: Research by people with disabilities about disability. *The Qualitative Report*, *22*(4), 984–1000.
Siddall, G., & Waterman, E. (Eds.). (2016). *Negotiated moments: Improvisation, sound, and subjectivity.* Duke University Press.
Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed Books Ltd.
Soja, E. (2010). *Seeking spatial justice.* University of Minnesota Press.
Solic, K., & Riley, K. (2019). Teacher candidates' experiences taking up issues of race and racism in an urban education fellowship program. *Action in Teacher Education*, *41*(2), 99–116.
Steingo, G., & Sykes, J. (Eds.). (2019). *Remapping sound studies.* Duke University Press.
Sterne, J. (Ed.). (2012). *The sound studies reader.* Routledge.
Stoever, J. L. (2016). *The sonic color line: Race and the cultural politics of listening*. NYU Press.
Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). University of Illinois Press.
Stoller, P. (1997). *Sensuous scholarship*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
Tatum, B. D. (2003). "*Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?": And other conversations about race.* Basic Books.
Tsing, A. L. (2005). *Friction: An ethnography on global connection*. Princeton University Press.
Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience.* University of Minnesota.
Varenne, H., & McDermott, R. (1998). *Successful failure: The school America builds.* Westview.
Washington, H.A. (2008). *Medical apartheid: The dark history of medical experimentation on Black Americans from colonial times to the present.* Anchor Books.
Watkins, W.H. (2001). *The White architects of Black education: Ideology and power in America, 1865–1954.* Teachers College Press.
Weheliye, A. G. (2014). *Habeas viscus: Racializing assemblages, biopolitics, and Black feminist theories of the human.* Duke University Press.
Williams, R. (1983). *Culture and society, 1780–1950*. Columbia University Press.
Williams, R. (1988). *Border country*. Hogarth Press.
Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*. Columbia University Press.
Winfield, A. G. (2007). *Eugenics and education in America: Institutionalized racism and the implications of history, ideology, and memory*. Peter Lang.
Wood, S., Henning, J. A., Chen, L., McKibben, T., Smith, M. L, Weber, M., Zemenick, A., & Ballen, C. J. (2020). A scientist like me: Demographic analysis of biology textbooks reveals both progress and long-term lags, *Proceedings B, 287*(1), 1–8.
Woodson, C. G. (1933). *Miseducation of the negro.* Tribeca Books.
Wozolek, B. (2018). In 8100 again: The sounds of students breaking. *Educational Studies*, *54*(4), 367–381.
Wozolek, B. (2021a). *Assemblages of violence in education: Everyday trajectories of oppression.* Routledge.
Wozolek, B. (2021b). "Is your dad a towel head?": Capitals of shame and necropolitics in post-9/11 America. *The Journal of Canadian Social Studies, 52*(2), 10–21.
Yosso, T. J., Smith, W. A., Ceja, M., & Solórzano, D. J. (2009). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate for Latina/o undergraduates. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(1), 659–691.

Todd, Z. (2016). An indigenous feminist's take on the ontological turn: "Ontology" is just another word for colonialism. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, *29*(1), 4–22.
Zinn, H. (2017). *A people's history of the United States.* Harper.

1

REVERBERATING KNOTS

Milford and The Crew

Schools are immersed in what Kathleen Stewart (2007) called the "politics of ordinary affect" (p. 17). The ordinary affects of schools can be anything. They are present in the moment when a police officer finds it appropriate to handcuff and arrest a six-year-old who was not an immediate danger to herself or others, as occurred in Florida in 2020. They are present when a student brims with confidence as they finally understand a concept, an event that many teachers and teacher candidates express as one that sustains them during difficult times in education. They are present when a student passes a test (or doesn't), when youth walk into a school and feel safe (or don't), and when they graduate and feel the emotional pull to say goodbye to one more person (or leave feeling elated that they no longer have to return). They are present across these moments and at every point in the continuum between these false binaries because, as scholars have discussed, affects often collapse on themselves while remaining omnidirectional. Simply stated, ordinary affects are everywhere—from flashes of love to moments of shaming to instances of care, all of which are normalized in schools. Ordinary affects are in circulation within and between communities—a constantly spilling ebb and flow that speaks to and leaks from every space where learning happens (Gumbs, 2016; Helfenbein, 2010).

Some ordinary affects can stir feelings of pride[1] and nostalgia, like listening to the sounds of graduation, applause at a school play, and other moments that linger on our ways of being long after an event has ended. Other affects shock us, like those surrounding the sounds of children getting arrested or beaten in school,[2] leaving many to wonder how frequently similar events occur that remain absent from the national news. It is important to remember that while Stewart calls affects "ordinary," they are far from universal. In their ordinary nature, affects can become

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245-2

normalized and, given privilege, they might be easy to overlook. For example, despite feeling outrage at the sound of a child crying for help, such anger rarely elicits systemic change to prevent the next iteration of violent events. Affects are therefore always political (Massumi, 2015) and, as with any form of sociopolitical intensities, they are always in motion. Even when they are perceived as immovable or still, the relationship between affecting and being affected ripples across the assemblages that are our lives.

One way to sonically conceptualize the movement of ordinary affects is through reverberation. There are many ways to theorize the literal and metaphorical significance of reverberations (e.g., Kuntsman, 2021; Gershon, 2020; James, 2019; Schroeder, 1965). Thinking through James' (2019) framing of the sonic episteme, it is important to consider how metaphors focused on reverberation can be reductionist while scientific dialogues on reverberation are potentially deterministic. Here, I argue that attention to both literal and metaphorical reverberations are important. As scholars across fields have discussed, affects physically reverberate against and between bodies, often entangling people across scale, time, and distance (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2019; DeLanda, 2019; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). Others have discussed the significance of metaphorical reverberations as norms become knotted with ontoepistemologies (Nxumalo & Cedillo, 2017; Sharpe, 2016; Weheliye, 2014). Both literal and metaphorical lenses are important when reflecting on how sounds impact and affect our physical and ontoepistemological selves.

Reverberations occur when sounds reflect off multiple surrounding surfaces, causing them to build up and then decay as they are absorbed. Reverberation time, or the time required for sound to dampen and stop, is dependent on distance, frequency, absorption coefficient of the surrounding space, and other such factors. Think, for example, of our inner songbird that is often released in the shower. We sound better under the faucet, in part, because of reverberation. Bathrooms tend to be small and tiled, allowing sound to reverberate in ways that add bass while creating a more resonant sound than your voice might have in other spaces. Take the same vocal performance to the living room and—because of the larger space and softer surfaces—Lizzo's "Truth Hurts" might be slightly painful to hear.

Reverberations and echoes are not synonymous. Echoes are reflected sound waves that seem relatively distinct because they have both sufficient sonic magnitude and adequate distance between the producer of the sound and the object(s) that reflect it. Reverberations, on the other hand, are often difficult to hear, as the listener negotiates both the direct sound and the repeated, reflected sound waves. Reverberations distort sound, comparatively muddying the sonic waters between speakers, listeners, and surfaces as sounds become entangled. The questions of what gets reverberated, for how long, and how lingering sounds are always in some way (mis)heard (Gershon, 2020) are akin to the complexity of ordinary affects. Unlike an echo, with sonically defined edges that are more easily

interpreted, reverberations are nested and layered sounds that accumulate, complicate, and distort the spaces and places of our lives.

The distinction between reverberations and echoes here is meant to elicit an attention to privilege. Returning to the evocative example of a six-year-old being handcuffed in a Florida school, one might hear the child pleading with the officer as an echo—the singular sound of one child, in one context, with sufficient distance between the context and that which reflects it. For others, the pleas for help exist in an echo chamber of oppression, with the pain of one child reverberating alongside the sounds of many others who are similarly breaking (Miller, 2005; Sharpe, 2016; Wozolek, 2018a)—a polyphony of de/reterritorializing (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) aggressions, along with all their moments of hope and healing. The ability to hear oppressions as echoes, rather than as an onslaught of reverberations, is a privilege. The narratives shared in this book are usually received in these broader echo chambers, or, as I have called them elsewhere, assemblages of violence (Wozolek, 2021a).

Assemblages of violence can be conceptualized as the multiplicity of past, present, and future aggressions that are entangled across sociocultural and political contexts. In other words, any one articulation of violence is necessarily dependent on other violent events. This is not an attempt to flatten the dynamic and deeply contextualized nature of violence. It is, however, an argument for paying attention to the knotted nature of aggression. In an echo chamber of oppression, each sound has its unique magnitude, aesthetic, clarity, tone, tenor, and other such factors that are central to both literal and metaphorical sounds (Riera et al., 2018; Solomon, 1958) of violence. Within the metaphor of an assemblage of violence, the sounds of aggressions reverberate polyphonically (Bakhtin, 1981)—resonating against each other, the listener, and broader sociopolitical and cultural norms.

Yet, the metaphor of an assemblage or an echo chamber is constraining. The sounds of violence cannot be contained. They reach beyond themselves and their contexts, affecting bodies across scales as they move. One might ask: What are the reverberations of posttraumatic stress disorder and how do they continue to vibrate in what sometimes feel like random patterns? Violence, like other vibrational affects (Gershon, 2013), can move through and stick to us like an earworm that remains entangled with our ways of being and doing for days, long after the song has faded. Even in the absence of sound, silence has movement—both the literal movement of particles still vibrating in the air and the heavy layers of ordinary affects that are felt long after the sounds of trauma have broken and spilled across spaces.

Such silence resists interpretation as oppressions become hidden, "kept under wraps even though it always echoes" (Moten, 2003, p. 104). Although silencing has a longstanding history as one of the master's tools (Lorde, 1984) for reinforcing oppressive norms and values (e.g., Cooper, 1892; Fine, 1987; Rogers-Ard & Knaus, 2020), the movement in silence is significant. Here I attend to silence and noise

not as a binary, but rather as collapsed and entangled (Attali, 1977; Dauenhauer, 1980), to understand how sound refuses silence. Take, for example, the anechoic chamber at Orfield Labs in Minnesota. The chamber absorbs 99.99% of sound and has been measured at -9.4 decibels, making it the quietest recorded place in the world. Those who have experienced this room have noted that they could hear their lungs fill with air, their heart beating, and their stomach juices flowing. In other words, in an anechoic chamber, "you become the sound" (Eveleth, 2013, para. 2). Even in human-made sound deprivation, our ear adjusts, seeking sonic orientations to ground our ways of being, knowing, and doing.

After about forty-five minutes of sonic deprivation, people generally become disoriented. Just as people can experience listening fatigue, there is a kind of exhaustion that comes from deep silence. Fatigue from forms of oppression, and from resisting and refusing oppressions, has been well documented (e.g., Lee, 1999; Simpson, 2014; Smith et al., 2007; Wozolek, 2020). Part of the movement within and through silence, then, is affective. This is not new. People feel this movement when they watch a child fall down and feel anticipation building in the silence as they wait to see if the child will get up or wail uncontrollably. We experience affective movements in intimate moments that are pregnant with possibilities, like when a person pauses and we wonder if they might affirm feelings of love. We feel these ordinary affects as we wait for last breaths to be exhaled, when we know a phone call is imminent, or as we wait for a baby's first cry.

There are several ways to interpret how one literally and metaphorically responds to reverberations, silenc(e)ing, and the movements therein. Freire (1970) discussed how the oppressed often become the oppressor. Foucault (1978), in his work on biopower that was expanded by Mbembe's (2019) necropolitics and Puar's (2007) queer necropolitics, explored the many ways that sovereign rule can reverberate to engender and maintain sociopolitical control. Scholars like Butler (2004) have discussed the factions in communities that marginalize people whose identities reside at multiple intersections of Otherness. Simpson (2014) wrote about the significance of resistance and refusal to the reverberations of settler colonialism, and many others have unpacked the multiplicity of living with and against the sounds and silences (Miller, 2005) that break near, sometimes breaking us.

The narratives collected in this study are therefore both about how students responded to echo chambers of oppression, the anechoic chambers created through the curriculum (and the many ways that affects spilled from these spaces) and about how adults in the school and community responded to the necropolitical conditions (re)created through schooling. As a curriculum theorist and educator, it is important to be transparent about my own participation in Milford High and how the narratives therefore resonate with and against my own ways of being, knowing, and doing. This next section will briefly explicate my positionality in the school before I introduce the students, the school, the district, and the community more broadly.

Milford and Me: Growing up in the Midwest

> Anthropology is loss, mourning, the longing for memory, the desire to enter into the world around you and having no idea how to do it, the fear of observing too coldly or too distractedly or too raggedly, the rage of cowardice, a sense of utter uselessness of writing anything and yet the burning desire to write something, [these are] the stopping places along the way . . . Anthropology is a mode of knowing that depends on the particular relationship formed by a particular anthropologist with a particular set of people in a particular time and place, anthropology has always been vexed about the question of vulnerability.
>
> —*Behar, 1996*

Vulnerability. We talk a lot about vulnerability as ethnographers. As a graduate student, I remember reading Ruth Behar's (1996) *The Vulnerable Observer* alongside Paul Stoller's (1997) *Sensuous Scholarship,* and Renato Rosaldo's (1993) *Culture and Truth* while considering the ethical and personal implications of vulnerability in a research context. I recall asking myself things like: When should I listen and when, and how much, should I share? How am I to listen to students (McCartney, 2016)? And, the question we seldom seem to explore as researchers: What happens when you leave a research context—both for the researcher and the participants?

Clifford Geertz (1973) noted that "the culture of people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong" (p. 452). The anthropologist, as one might imagine, is also an ensemble of texts. It is this entanglement of bodies, histories, cultures, and so forth, to which I wish to attend. Specifically, I'm concerned with how such entanglements are sometimes inundated with violence, making the participant observer's job even more difficult as she struggles not to "get it all wrong" (Wolcott, 1990, p. 47) as she "moves between forms . . . and texts" (Geertz, 1973, p. 454), finding herself as much as she finds the cultures to which the study belongs.

It is important to note, then, that my experiences and feelings about my time in the school and community where this study was conducted have always been less than positive. While I spent two years in this context as a participant observer, I also devoted several years of my career as an educator in the school district. This was also the same area in the Midwest where I spent most of my childhood. It is a town where, when I was young, I was chained to a tree by the neighbors' children while they interrogated me about my father's green card status. It is a place where, as a high school student, I was approached by the father of a young man that I had dated and, after calling me "exotic," told me that "brown girls are to have fun with until you settle down with a nice (white) girl." It is a place where my older brother and stepfather were kicked out of a store for "looking at merchandise too closely" while shopping for a gift for our mother at a local boutique. It was the school

where a student—whose parent had admitted in a parent-teacher conference that I was "everything he hated" due to my race and gender—threw a sharp object at me during class, aiming for my face. An administrator chuckled about this incident, explaining that he was "probably teasing in the way boys do" and that she knew this because she had asked him to recreate the event in her office using a pencil and a poster on her wall. Yet when another student threw an object at a white teacher in my department a few weeks later, that student was suspended immediately. It is a district where, when a queer student who had moved away due to extreme bullying just two months prior died by suicide, we were told that no grief counseling services would be made available as she was "no longer *our* student."

What is perhaps most upsetting is that the kinds of racism, sexism, anti-queer bias, and xenophobia that characterized my time as a high school student in this (and similar) once-rural, now-suburban Midwestern places continued unabated, both for me as a teacher and, even worse, for youth who identified as girls, "visible" minorities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender nonconforming, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual two-spirit, and the like (LGBTGNQIA2S+) students. These descriptions are not hyperbole. For example, I don't believe I experienced a single year where I was not called a "spic," "a fag lover," or another epithet by a colleague in the teacher's lounge. These were people who were clear about their cishetero white supremacy and used it in an old-school way for punishment, disenfranchisement, and frequent micro- and macroaggressions.

The administration's response to me, regardless of my role, position, or number of years at the school, was also consistent. I routinely noted these problems with other teachers and cataloged them. The administrators' responses were to ignore, obfuscate, or escalate, insisting that any concerns I documented could "not be taken seriously unless [the administrator] knew who engaged inappropriately and in what context." When I explained that the problem was systemic and that I feared retaliation if I gave specific names, I was told that before any action could be taken with systemic bias, it was "important for the faculty member to be able to tell their side." Although this may seem like a rather usual tactic, there were several times where queer students from this study reported that they were beaten until left with visible bruises,[3] only to have the administration somehow unable to produce the video tapes from the hall security cameras around those times or events.

The point here is that, in all cases, not only does the participant observer deal with the research environments, but the environments also impact the researcher. Engaging ethnographically is hard work, both in terms of the physical demand to be in as many places as possible, but also in terms of the emotional toll that it takes to negotiate the lines between being a participant, an observer, and, in my case, a teacher in the building. For example, what does it mean as a researcher when you hear a colleague use the "N-word" to describe a student?[4] How do you wrestle with the ethics of reporting such violence when both the student and the faculty member are protected participants in the research? How do you respond when,

in light of this instance and other findings, you recommend antiracist training to administration and are told that, unless you compromise confidentiality and give the names of the participants and the contexts in which the racist events occurred, they cannot take the recommendation seriously?

Considering these concerns for me as a researcher, it is perhaps not surprising that students of color, especially queer students of color and girls of color, were treated poorly at this school. The documentation of everyday racism, queer bias, sexism, xenophobia, and ableism is central to this study and the arguments that follow, as is tracing those trajectories and their overwhelmingly negative impact on students, the majority of whom happened to be perceived as members of disenfranchised groups. That students of color remain an overwhelming minority in this school, and schools like it, can often operate to hide the depth of the discrimination, as the impact is not considered "significant" enough to address.

I note these events to be transparent that my perspective, like all perspectives, is in many ways biased. In the interests of transparency and vulnerability, I have struggled for years with the decision to write about this data. The reasons for these reservations were at least twofold: First, I wanted emotional space from the context so that I could wrestle with my own feelings about the data before reengaging with it. Although objectivity is impossible (Bhattacharya, 2017; Lather, 2013), it is nonetheless important that the participant observer considers her own "ensemble of texts" (Geertz, 1973) in the analysis. I therefore wanted to look at this data with a perspective grown from sufficient time and physical distance between my embedding in the context and my initial analysis.

Second, I wanted enough time to pass so that all student participants in this study would have graduated from high school and, for those who attended college, with an associate's or bachelor's degree. After data collection and my initial analysis was complete, I had one student reveal to me that they were experiencing a form of posttraumatic stress disorder diagnosed by their therapist. They noted that the therapist felt there was a strong link between their experiences at Milford and their anxiety. Specifically, they expressed feeling that a quick publication of this data would make the administration "come for them," academically. A second participant, a faculty member who has since retired, reached out after retirement with a similar diagnosis from a therapist. He also expressed concern about retribution for sharing his experiences, noting that he was glad that the data was deidentified, leaving him feeling protected and less anxious. I therefore felt ethically compelled to make sure that participants who noted a trauma-informed reaction had sufficient time away from the context before I considered publishing. I also attempted to reach out to every youth participant, regardless of the information they shared, to ask if, even after several years, they were comfortable with me including their voices, perspectives, and narratives.

The following work painstakingly provides evidence for each instance of aggression, violence, and gaslighting. As with the information provided in this section, it will be delivered directly and transparently so that the reader may consider

the merit of the argument themselves. It was because of my own experiences that I was alerted to the kinds of things students said. However, while a researcher's personal history inevitably plays strongly into how she sees an event, as Behar (1996) argues, I worked to view my histories reflexively to understand how they nested into my perceptions of the research context. Like many scholars who think deeply about ideas that haunt them, this study is in many ways a reflexive investigation into my own experiences, biases, and concerns. Although the details of my experiences are significant in my personal life, I have addressed them in previous work (e.g., Wozolek, 2018b, 2021a, 2021b). Going forward, the purpose of this work focuses on the students' own everyday engagements with violence and how they negotiated the reverberations of that violence and associated ordinary affects at school.

Statistically ~~in~~significant: (Re)membering Black and Brown stories

The pollution of racism in schooling is constantly and consistently propagated through historically and politically situated places and spaces that designate students of color's ways of knowing and being as Other. As students of color negotiate school spaces and places in ways that inform their lived experiences, they become uniquely positioned to articulate what schooling means in their particular context. Milford High School is a predominantly white high school in the Midwest. At the time of the study, the student population of the school was nearly 2,400 students, approximately 94% white, 4% Black, 1% Latinx, and 1% Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous students combined. As of 2021, the school is slightly more diverse, with 91% white, 3% Black, 2% Latinx, 1% Asian, and 3% multiracial students. At the time of the study, the racial demographics of students were mirrored in the school's faculty and administration. There were only three faculty members of color among the 120 teachers in the building, myself included.

The school was purposefully selected based on (a) a willingness to participate in a long-term study where a researcher of color is thinking with students of color about their self-perception in relation to school culture, (b) a context where students of color are not only minorities within a white population but also marginalized through curriculum and school culture, and (c) an invitation to think with students that was student initiated, as I will discuss momentarily. It should also be noted that the decision to research at this site was in many ways a practical decision, as it was the school where I was employed full time as a world language teacher. This meant that, in many ways, my relationships with some participants had already been established by my everyday presence at the school in the years prior to the beginning of the study.

Thirty students, four parents, twelve teachers, the school resource officer, a white woman who worked in the cafeteria, a Black boys' basketball coach, and

four building principals agreed to participate in this study. Of the students, fourteen identified as young women and sixteen as young men. Students racially identified themselves in the following ways: Four were white (one young man and three young women). The young women of color identified one as Indian, one as Brazilian American, one as Black with Guyanese roots, one as Latinx, three as biracial, and six as Black. The young men of color included three biracial, two Latinx, and eight Black students.[5] Of the thirty students, three openly identified as lesbians, one as a gay man, and one young woman said she was questioning her sexual identity. Sixteen students reported that they were on the free/reduced-cost lunch program. Of the teachers, all but one identified as white and there was an even split among the two genders represented in faculty. The administrators all identified as white, with one woman among the group of four. Of the parents, all four identified as Black. There were no adults that identified as queer or questioning.

Adult participants were selected through a combination of their relationship to the students in this study and their professional roles at the school. As relationships between students and faculty emerged during the study, adults were invited for interviews. Although many adults in this study had official roles tied to their employment with the school, which informed the way that others identified them, they also had identities that resonated and/or were dissonant with these roles. For example, the coach, who identified as Black, was deeply committed to the social development, personal growth, and athletic and educational success of the players. However, he felt that his position as a coach kept him in frequent contact with the administration, teachers, and parents, who were not in direct relation to the basketball team.

Finally, a note on the fact that the diversity of student participants was not mirrored in adult participation. This was not only because there was a lack of faculty of color, but also because my goal was to foreground the narratives of students of color. While one teacher in the district felt that this was "unfair"—he thought the narratives of students of color should be "balanced" with white narratives—it is this kind of false parity that marginalizes minority voices as their stories are viewed as statistically insignificant. As a queer woman of color, the mother of two children, and a teacher-researcher who witnessed these oppressions, I strongly believe that one injustice is too many in any place but, specific to this study, especially in schools. The narratives of students of color are significant because, as Katherine McKittrick (2021) writes, if we focus only on dominant narratives, we condone the statistical dehumanization and devaluing of marginalized stories. Throughout this re-examination of the data, I also wrestled with potentially reinforcing a pessimistic view of students' experiences. After all, alongside sounds of tears and frustration, I frequently recorded laughter and sounds of joy. The human experience and our affects, as one might imagine, are filled with complex beauty. However, in the interest of representing the narratives that students wished to share, alongside my observations and analysis, I decided not to overly represent

some narratives solely for the sake of readers' reprieve. This is not to say that joy, hope, and love were not entangled within these narratives, or to say that such affects should not be celebrated. They should. While difficult, this book engages with the stories often relegated to the null curriculum in places like teacher education programs across the United States.

Finally, this study, like most ethnographic inquiries, was driven by what Agar (1996) described as "rich points," or events that "[signal] a gap between worlds" (p. 31) and that interrupt the ethnographer's normalized ways of being, knowing, and doing. This is particularly difficult for someone researching a familiar context because the hidden curriculum—the unintended lessons and perspectives absorbed by simply participating in a context—often hides what might otherwise be an unusual event for someone who is new. It was therefore often difficult to engage in the ethnographic practice of "making the familiar strange and the strange familiar" (Spindler & Spindler, 1982, p. 395) as I sorted out the violence that I had internalized (David, 2013; Lorde, 1984) over time. This next section therefore turns to how students and I began a collective journey of unpacking everyday oppressions at Milford High.

War of the Half-Breeds: Rich Moments at Milford

Milford High was a school where, because of urban flight and other suburbanization projects in the 1980s to the late 1990s, the school district had faced a need to expand. Rather than building a second high school, the district passed a levy to build around the original school, renovate existing classrooms, and build a second wing that attached to a community center. The original plan was to have four "houses" to keep each grade level contained. However, as subsequent levies failed, it became financially difficult to staff the four sections with teachers for each discipline. As a result, the district used the school colors to separate the four houses into two halves—the original side was dubbed the "green" side and the newly constructed wing became the "white" side of the building. While this had no bearing on where student classes were located, it is a point to which I return later in a discussion of school layout and violence. Given the district's decision to build onto the existing structure, the building became rather long, with roughly a quarter mile of distance from one end to the other.

Due to the length of the school, when the closing bell rang at 2:20pm, there was a mad dash as some students tried to sprint from a classroom at one end of the school to their locker at the other, and then back to the middle of the building to catch the bus or to find their ride waiting in the car line. Other students lingered, meandering slowly through the halls, often gathering in groups as they waited for an after-school sport or club, avoided walking home, searched for a friend, or engaged in some other activity. At the same time, the copy room closed at 3:00pm, which meant that teachers looking to pick up copies or make a large batch of worksheets for the next day were often trying to politely push past

students strolling or standing in groups while avoiding a collision with students who were on a mission to get out of the building.

My classroom was located upstairs on the "green" side, and therefore in the furthest possible place from the "white" side. This not only meant that I had a quarter-mile walk to the copy room, often during prime time, but also placed me at a great distance from room 214 on the "white" side, where my coadvisor for the Genders and Sexualities Alliance (GSA) was located. It was therefore not unusual to see my petite body struggling upstream to pick up copies or get to Ms. Paxson's classroom to prepare for a meeting. Prior to this study when I regularly took fieldnotes after school, as a rather small person, I tried to avoid the chaos of the halls, unless I needed to get to the copy room or to the GSA. Additionally, when I found myself in the middle of particularly oppressive days or weeks in the school, I often tried not to venture out of my classroom at all unless it was unavoidable. Sometimes I found myself waiting until the hallway was cleared, arriving late to GSA meetings to avoid other colleagues and administrators.

One fall afternoon, I found the chaos of the mad dash to the copy room unavoidable. As I made my way down the stairs and into the main hallway, I was stopped by Christian's voice calling out loudly above the fray. "Hey! Hey! Woz!" he yelled. "Will you be our leader?" I turned to see a group of biracial young men, many of whom had been in my class over the past few years.

"Your leader in *what*?" I inquired, assuming that it would be a fast, sarcastic answer given the gathered group.

"In the war of the half-breeds,[6] of course!" Darius remarked with a grin. "You're our only half-breed teacher, right? So, we need a leader. Wanna help?"

I looked around, noting again that these were all male students. I asked where the biracial girls were. They gestured down the hall, pointing to a small group of young women of color a few yards away. Marcus informed me that this part of the hall was called "Little Africa" by the students and staff alike, as generations of Black and brown youth had congregated in the same area. He noted, however, that their group, called "The Crew," stayed at the bottom of the stairs because it "showed their position in life." My eyes traced the stairwell, watching students move around the edge of The Crew to continue on their way out of the building. Then I glanced past the group, across the hallway, to where administrators leaned casually along the brick wall, laughing about something while scanning the movement of the teenagers in the corridor. One looked up and gave me a nod. In later conversations I would learn that, aside from the metaphorical position of the stairs, the location had practical implications. The choice to be by the stairs, participants explained, gave students access to two halls and multiple exits, should they feel a need to leave the area quickly. I excused myself from the group, telling them that this conversation was "to be continued," and hurried to the copy room.

After returning to my classroom, I sat listening to the reverberations that are often palpable in the moments of silence that befall a school just after it has

emptied. As a teacher, I could never quite tell if these reverberations were the sounds of the day leaving my body, if the thick silence was the noise from the closing-bell chaos dampening as it crashed on the walls, some combination of these, or if they were some unnamed thing that I could nonetheless feel. I sat in and with these reverberations, reflecting on the events that had just transpired in the hallway and the brief conversation with my colleagues. Ringing continuously in my body were questions like: How many times had I passed that area and not thought about who was occupying the space, aside from noting that they were partially blocking the stairs? Were there similar groups when I was in high school that I missed because I was one of the students rushing to get out of the school? Perhaps most significantly, I wondered what these reverberations meant for those students at a moment when the Black Lives Matter movement was just starting to trend across social media and conservative backlash in small Midwestern places was becoming noticeable.

At that moment, my thoughts were interrupted by the boisterous voices of two white, male, veteran teachers chatting on their way out of the building. I peeked my head out and said, "Hey! Quick, random question. Do you know what or where Little Africa is?"

One teacher, who was set to retire that year, chuckled. "Yes. How do *you* not know that? It's where all the Blacks hang out. Bottom of the stairs. Been that way as long as I can recall," he said, barely slowing his pace to answer as they resumed their conversation.

That event served as a catalyst for a year-long study investigating the ways that students of color negotiate the spaces and places of a predominantly white high school and functioned as the rich point that ignited the inquiry for this book. While I will not recount all the details of this initial study here, as I have written about them elsewhere (e.g., Wozolek, 2019), I include a few significant moments and findings, intrarelated events that underscore the context of the rest of the book. Perhaps most importantly, my time with The Crew revealed examples of the many ways that students form their own formal and hidden curricula.

Aligned with Spivak's (2003) notion that knowledge is never innocent, as well as other anthropological dialogues on how the oppressed manage to carve out spaces of possibility (e.g., Fine, 1987; Francis, 2016; Gershon, 2017; Goffman, 1961; Willis, 1977), The Crew worked in their own ways to push against curricular structures of whiteness. Specifically, they set up their own system to recruit and train other marginalized students to deal with the ubiquitous oppressions they faced in school. While they were clear that they targeted students of color for these lessons, they also watched for other students who seemed disenfranchised, who they felt they could help in some way. As Anthony, a tall, thin, high school senior explained, "School already fucks you up, why shouldn't we have a way to make sure it doesn't fuck up everyone who doesn't fit in?" The next section discusses one example from this first project that highlights how The Crew worked against whiteness to ensure that school didn't further "fuck up" all students.

Etiquette

One of the challenges of ethnographic work in any space—let alone a large school where students are beholden to a bell schedule or hide away when they've decided to ignore the system—is finding significant places and times to be in the "right" place. One afternoon during my planning (noninstructional) period, I started my usual stroll around the building. Through previous interviews, I knew that several Crew members were available for what they called "the business." This ranged from catching up on their day, to talking with "new recruits," to, as one student put it, "getting into general mayhem." As I entered a stairwell, I heard voices rising up from the bottom. I quickly recognized Marcus' and Anthony's voices but could not discern the third. Although I would check in later to make sure all three students were comfortable with their conversation being included in the data, this was one of those rare moments where I could just listen to Crew business without interrupting it with my presence.

"Seriously? Goddamn, nigga . . . That's what you call a handshake? Why don't you try it again?" Marcus, a 6'2" football player said loudly, followed by the loud smacking of palms.

> Good. Goooooood! Better, anyway. You've got to have a strong handshake but not too strong. A Black man around here has to show he's worth a conversation but not too dominant, okay? You do that in a handshake but you cannot be the head Negro in charge around these people. Or at least that's kind of what my business teacher said.

Anthony laughed and replied,

> Always gotta tell us somethin' about school, huh? Whatever, common Elijah. I'll show you the best ways to get around the halls without getting stopped. Now what did your fucking teacher tell you about *that*, Marcus? Was it on the chapter about how to be a Black businessman and *not* get arrested?

Laughter ascended up the stairs as their footsteps rescinded down the hall.

In a subsequent interview, Anthony and Marcus explained that this interaction about respectability politics was typical "Crew business." The infrastructure of The Crew was surprisingly specific, as they were able to name everyone's position and associated tasks, from lookout to emissary. Marcus explained that when they have a new member, they tried to think of that student's strengths and then directed them to serve in that capacity for Crew business. Whether it was showing empathy to a new student or, as described in the conversation above, teaching students the "right way" of being a Black man in an overwhelmingly white institution, each member of The Crew performed tasks they believed would help marginalized students feel safe, recognized, and included at school.

When I inquired about considering a school-sanctioned structure for the work they were doing in, perhaps, the form of a Black Student Caucus, Marcus explained that he had already proposed the idea to an administrator in his sophomore year. At the time, he was told that, like every club in the school, they would need to find an advisor, get administrative approval, hold a trial group for a year, then present the group to student council for a vote to decide if it could become a formal school activity. Given the pushback some Black students felt they received for simply attending school, they felt it was a waste of time to formalize Crew activities. "Besides," Marcus said, "it's better this way. We're able to do what we want, when we want. None of these rednecks can tell us no."

Although Anthony's comment about "*not* getting arrested" was made, to some degree, in jest, Crew members often expressed their frustration with racial profiling from fellow students, teachers, and administrators. They expressed how ideas and ideals about blackness hindered their academic lives but also emphasized that the ability to execute Crew business was intended to create a more inclusive school environment. This was important for two reasons. The first speaks to questions of resistance and refusal. One student, Derrick, noted that while he understood the need for teachers and administrators to account for students during the day for school safety, he also noted that he felt safety was synonymous with control at Milford. He once quipped,

> Like in your Spanish class. Didn't you tell us that different countries run the school day different than we do? Like open-bell schedules? Here, they just be tryin' to tell us where to be. Like *every moment of every day.* You even gotta learn to take a piss on their schedule.

Students recognized that places where they might learn how to resist and refuse oppression—from the classroom to the corridor (Metz, 1978)—were absent. Crew members were aware that white ways of being and knowing meant that their presence was always seen as a threat, especially if that presence was perceived as resisting normalized whiteness. Sometimes, as I discuss in Chapter 3, this came in the form of teachers and administrators interrupting group meetings despite other students openly congregating in the halls. Other times, it meant that their white peers would report their activities, as a form of, as Darius said, "Breaking up what they were afraid was trouble."

Second, one of the advertised pillars of the school's culture at the time was "Every student, every time," meant to convey that faculty, staff, and administrators recognized and actively worked to reinforce that every student throughout the school was valued in every interaction. The Crew, however, noted that their approach to this motto, which involved socializing their fellow students of color into the school's sociocultural structure and policies, was often labeled as "bad behavior." This is predominantly due to how place was constructed in this school, an understanding that mirrors the construction of space and place

in many institutional geographies (e.g., Foley, 1990; Goffman, 1961; Nespor, 1997). The Crew had identified the corridors of the school as the primary and safest location for conducting their business and meetings, a place where students in general, and students of color specifically, were expressly not permitted to congregate.

The label of "bad behavior" was significant for The Crew because most members were already on the school's "discipline ladder" for actions that the administration perceived as not following school conduct. This behavior included The Crew's consistent presence in the hallways or, as administrators explained it, "being wanderers." When this data was initially presented in an open forum to community members, the idea that students would wander the building was extremely disconcerting to police officers. Rather than being concerned with the emotional health of students who would rather wander the halls than be present in class, officers' initial reaction was to ask if there was a way to "tighten security" by "better surveilling students through increased police presence." What is missing from this argument is how on one hand it assumes youth wandering the halls are prone to violence and, as recently demonstrated at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, it conflates police presence with safety or the ability to prevent or stop violence.

Police perception of students' behavior was understood as a possible security issue by administrators, but viewed as a necessity by Crew members. This is not to say that students' decision to be present in the halls could not be both at once. It should also be noted that such movement in the halls was not always an expression of Crew work but, sometimes, an opportunity for students to be away from class. As Nespor (1997) notes, the knot of schooling gives way to all these possibilities as factors that tie together the social relationships in schools. Further, as explored through scholarship on the school-to-prison pipeline (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005), Crew members articulated frustration with the tension between knowing that smaller offenses were more likely to place them further up the discipline ladder and wanting to be a part of grassroots change for students of color.

Their efforts were therefore largely unknown by staff and administration at best and, at worst, only precipitated more punishment. As students struggled with their value in the larger scope of the school, rather than being understood as working to help peers better negotiate the school—something administrators ironically often noted as something that students of color needed more help with—the punishment they received for Crew business cast an impression of an absence of care from the systems of schooling in response to their attempts to attend to injustices.

Tracing Reverberations of Racism

> It's weird . . . Why would you? If I tell you I didn't do it, why bring me in three days in a row to basically try and tell me that I did do it when I know

> I didn't do it and it's not even that a big deal? But something that is a big deal, kids just have to write a letter about it and they're off the hook.[7]

Sounds are everywhere. Even when one believes there's nothing to be "heard," like in an anechoic chamber, silence has movement. Think for a moment about haptic noise. As you read this book, your fingers slide on the page or scroll on a keypad or mouse, depending on the medium. Haptic noise can be subtle, like a finger tracing the edge of a desk, or relatively loud, like when one taps with annoyance, nervous anticipation, or joy. Haptic sounds are important because what we hear (or don't) and what we perceive (or miss) in sounds shapes the way we respond to other bodies (Haverkamp, 2017). This re-turns me to questions of intention, attention, and expression (Gershon, 2020). How one responds to even the most subtle reverberations is bidirectional: It is at once about the intention, attention, and expression of the person making the sound and about the recipient's translation of those factors (Gershon, 2020). One's translation is often entangled with previous events as these too are imbricated with prior intentions, attentions, and expressions. This is perhaps why trigger warnings are necessary. They are not just about a speaker's message but also a way to consider the many ways that sounds reverberate on the being, knowing, and doing of others, an attention to past, present, and future entanglements with violence.

In my attention to how violence moved through Milford and entangled with students' ways of being, knowing, and doing, I consider how ordinary affects reverberate in agential ways and how they become knotted in schools and communities. The consistent movement of the sounds of violence is significant within an assemblage because these sounds can be traced across times, space, and places. While it might be unique in its presentation, violence never exists in isolation. The Crew members were generally aware of this and, using their available wiggle room, created spaces of resistance and refusal.

Racism at Milford, as in every context, acts as its own form of curriculum. It is present from the formal to the null to the hidden and enacted curricula in schools. For The Crew, an awareness of the multiple, fluid ways that this curriculum interacted with their ways of being and knowing was significant because it meant that they could find paths of resistance against or ways to move around the reverberations of racism, both metaphorically and literally. White students and staff with the privilege to hear violence as an echo, rather than as the reverberating noise and silence that The Crew members experienced, were similarly impacted by the curriculum of racism, but in the positive: They maintained racisms because it took so little effort to gain so much. In so doing, where white students enacted what Du Bois (1926) called the "distorted ugliness" (p. 9) of schooling, students of color were hit by continual waves of the ugliness of racism.

While schools use the null curriculum to erase narratives of what those in power might consider to be sociocultural and historical ugliness (Zinn, 2015),

students like those in The Crew feel as though they have no choice but to continue embodying a physical representation of that null curricula. Their presence is further marginalized because it makes explicit that which those in power have worked hard to avoid: Attending to the racist and racialized formal curricula, for example. My time with The Crew therefore stands as a reminder of how curriculum is always, to borrow from Schwab (1969), in-action, falling on marginalized youth. As racialized violence continues to fall on bodies of color in and outside of schools, recognizing how racism ontologically lands on all participants in schools becomes all the more significant. From Woodson's (1933) warning of how educational lynching in schools normalizes physical lynching outside of them, narratives like those of The Crew underscore how curricula of racism ontologically suffocate students of color, a point continuously raised in this text. From this perspective, attention to what reverberates across the curricula can be deeply valuable, serving as a strong indicator of how we continue to normalize the sucker punch of privilege and the violence it engenders across contexts every day.

Notes

1 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/News1.mp3
2 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/News-2.mp3
3 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/bruises.mp3
4 While my dual role of teacher-researcher often put me in difficult situations in terms of reporting, I always adhered to the mandatory reporting laws of the state. As I discuss later, there were certain contexts where students revealed thoughts of self-harm, suicide, or crimes they or others had committed. In those cases, as someone working with minors, I was legally and ethically obligated to report the conversations through particular channels (e.g., school counselors, administration, Child and Protective Services, and, in one instance, the police).
5 Due to the racial demographics of student participants, much of this book focuses on the narratives of Black students. This is not to dismiss the significant voices of the Latinx, Southeast Asian, Brazilian, or Guyanese students who participated; their perspectives were also critical. Rather, this reflects the range of narratives collected during the study.
6 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Half-Breeds.mp3
7 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/apologies.mp3

Bibliography

Agar, M. H. (1996). *The professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography* (2nd ed.). Academic Press.

Attali, J. (1977). *Noise: The political economy of music.* Minnesota Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays.* Trans. C. Emerson & M. Holquist. University of Texas Press.

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.

Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Beacon Press.

Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of qualitative research: A practical guide*. Routledge.

Braidotti, R. (2019). *Posthuman knowledge*. Polity Press.

Butler, J. (2004). *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. Verso.

Cooper, A. J. (1892). *A voice from the South, by a Black woman from the South.* University of North Carolina Press.

Christle, C. A., Jolivette, K., & Nelson, C. M. (2005). Breaking the school to prison pipeline: Identifying school risk and protective factors for youth delinquency. *Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal, 13*(2), 69–88.

Dauenhauer, B. P. (1980). *Silence: The phenomenon and its ontological significance*. Indiana University Press.

David, E. J. R. (Ed.). (2013). *Internalized oppression: The psychology of marginalized groups*. Springer Publishing Company.

DeLanda, M. (2019). *A new philosophy of society: Assemblage theory and social complexity.* Bloomsbury Publishing.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press.

Dewey, J., & Bentley, A. F. (1946). Interaction and transaction. *The Journal of Philosophy, 43*(19), 505–517.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1926). Criteria of Negro art. *The Crisis, 32*, 290–297.

Eveleth, R. (2013). Earth's quietest place will drive you crazy in 45 minutes, *Smithsonian Magazine.* Retrieved from: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/earths-quietest-place-will-drive-you-crazy-in-45-minutes-180948160/.

Fanon, F. (1964). *Toward the African revolution: Political essays*. Grove Press.

Fine, M. (1987). Silencing in public schools. *Language Arts, 64*(2), 157–174.

Francis, D. A. (2016). *Troubling the teaching and learning of gender and sexuality diversity in South African education*. Springer.

Foley, D. E. (1990). *Learning capitalist culture: Deep in the hearts of the Tejas*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The will to knowledge: The history of sexuality, volume 1*. Penguin.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* Trans. M. B. Ramos. Continuum.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretations of cultures*. Basic Books.

Gershon, W. S. (2013). Vibrational affect: Sound theory and practice in qualitative research. *Cultural Studies? Critical Methodologies, 13*(4), 257–262.

Gershon, W. S. (2017). *Curriculum and students in classrooms: Everyday urban education in an era of standardization.* Lexington Books.

Gershon, W. S. (2020). Reverberations and reverb: Sound possibilities for narrative, creativity, and critique. *Qualitative Inquiry, 26*(10), 1163–1173.

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates.* Doubleday.

Gregg, M., & Seigworth, G. J. (Eds.). (2010). *The affect theory reader*. Duke University Press.

Gumbs, A. P. (2016). *Spill: Scenes of Black feminist fugitivity*. Duke University.

Haverkamp, M. C. (2017). Effects of material touch-sounds on perceived quality of surfaces. *SAE International Journal of Materials and Manufacturing, 10*(2), 182–190.

Helfenbein, R. J. (2010). Thinking through scale: Critical geographies and curriculum spaces. In E. Malewski (Ed.*), Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment* (pp. 304–317). Routledge.

James, R. (2019). *The sonic episteme: Acoustic resonance, neoliberalism, and biopolitics*. Duke University Press.

Kuntsman, A. (2021). *Reverberation, affect, and digital politics of responsibility*. In M. Boler & E. Davis (Eds.), *Affective politics of digital media: Propaganda by other means* (pp. 69–85). Routledge.

Lather, P. (2013). Methodology-21: What do we do in the afterward? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 26*(6), 634–645.

Lee, S. (1999). Fat, fatigue and the feminine: The changing cultural experience of women in Hong Kong. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry, 23*(1), 51–73.

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches by Audre Lorde*. Crossing Press.

Massumi, B. (2015*). Politics of affect*. John Wiley & Sons.

Mbembe, A. (2019). *Necropolitics.* Duke University Press.

McCartney, A. (2016). "How am I to listen to you?": Soundwalking, intimacy, and improvised listening. In G. Sidall & E. Waterman (Eds.), *Negotiated moments: Improvisation, sound, and subjectivity* (pp. 37–54). Duke University Press.

McKittrick, K. (2021). *Dear science and other stories.* Duke.

Metz, M. H. (1978). *Classrooms and corridors: The crisis of authority in desegregated secondary schools.* University of California Press.

Miller, J. L. (2005). *Sounds of silence breaking: Women, autobiography, curriculum.* Peter Lang.

Moten, F. (2003). *In the break: The aesthetics of the black radical tradition*. University of Minnesota Press.

Nespor, J. (1997). *Tangled up in school: Politics, space, bodies, and signs in the educational process*. Routledge.

Nxumalo, F., & Cedillo, S. (2017). Decolonizing place in early childhood studies: Thinking with Indigenous onto-epistemologies and Black feminist geographies. *Global Studies of Childhood,* 7(2), 99–112.

Puar, J. (2007). *Terrorist assemblages: Homonationalism in queer times*. Duke University Press.

Riera, A., Rountree, R. A., & Juanes, F. (2018). Describing new fish sounds from the northeast Pacific: A quantitative approach. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, 144*(3), 1693–1693.

Rogers-Ard, R., & Knaus, C. B. (2020). *Black educational leadership: From silencing to authenticity*. Routledge.

Rosaldo, R. (1993). *Culture & truth: The remaking of social analysis*. Beacon Press.

Schroeder, M. R. (1965). New method of measuring reverberation time. *The Journal of the Accoustical Society of America, 37*(6), 1187–1188.

Schwab, J. J. (1969). The practical: A language for curriculum. *The School Review, 78*(1), 1–24.

Sharpe, C. (2016). *In the wake: On blackness and being.* Duke University Press.

Simpson, A. (2014). *Mohawk interruptus.* Duke University Press.

Smith, W. A., Allen, W. R., & Danley, L. L. (2007). "Assume the position . . . you fit the description" psychosocial experiences and racial battle fatigue among African American male college students. *American Behavioral Scientist, 51*(4), 551–578.

Solomon, L. N. (1958). Semantic approach to the perception of complex sounds. *The Journal of the Accoustical Society of America, 30(5),* 421–425.

Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (1982). *Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational anthropology in action.* Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Spivak, G. C. (2003). Can the subaltern speak?. *Die Philosophin, 14*(27), 42–58.

Stewart, K. (2007*). Ordinary affects*. Duke University Press.

Stoller, P. (1997). *Sensuous scholarship*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Weheliye, A. G. (2014). *Habeas viscus: Racializing assemblages, biopolitics, and Black feminist theories of the human.* Duke University Press.

Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs.* Columbia University Press.

Wolcott, H. F. (1990). *Writing up qualitative research.* Sage.

Wozolek, B. (2018a). In 8100 again: The sounds of students breaking. *Educational Studies: A Journal of the American Educational Studies Association, 54*(4), 367–381.

Wozolek, B. (2018b). Gaslighting queerness: GSAs, schooling, and teachers' education. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 15*(4), 319–338.

Wozolek, B. (2019). War of the half-breeds: Communities of color, resistance, and racist education in a high school in the Midwest. In W. S. Gershon (Ed.), *Sensuous curriculum: The politics of the senses in education* (pp. 67–84). Information Age Press.

Wozolek, B. (2020). Glq forum/queer battle fatigue in classrooms and communities. *GLQ, 26*(2), 215–218.

Wozolek, B. (2021a). *Assemblages of violence in education: Everyday trajectories of oppression.* Routledge.

Wozolek, B. (2021b). "Is your dad a towelhead?": Capitals of shame and necropolitics in post-9/11 America, *Canadian Social Studies, 52(2), 10–21.*

Woodson, C. G. (1933). *The mis-education of the Negro.* Tribeca Books.

Zinn, H. (2015). *A people's history of the United States: 1492–present*. Routledge.

2

TOO BLACK FOR SCHOOL

Finding Places, Making Spaces

It's 7:17am and the hallways of the high school are filled with the sound of teenagers talking, laughing, and moving toward their first-period classes. Three or four minutes before the bell rings, a song begins to play over the PA. A new song is played daily as a reminder that class will start soon. As the music starts there is typically a lull in conversation as the students listen to hear the morning selection. Generally, pop songs or oldies fill the halls but this morning the Jackson 5's *ABC*[1] begins to play. A large group of African American and biracial students who spend their time in the morning socializing by the stairs outside of the gym stop moving and talking completely.

As the music begins to pick up there is a loud, "Aaaahhhh yea!" that erupts from the group. One male student calls out, "They found some of our music! That's right, now it's our time!" Several of the boys begin to dance, clap, and sing along while the girls in the group watch and giggle at the display. One student would later explain that the dancing was not only a chance to show off for the girls, but also functioned as a performative demonstration for other students and staff. White students passing by give the group a wide berth and either stare with great intent, pointing as they pass, or work equally hard not to look. An administrator who frequently monitors the hallway in the morning says nothing to the group and instead shakes his head, sincerely, without an ounce of irony, eyeing the group carefully with a slight smile but not interrupting. The song continues and the group moves to class, making sure to drop off the

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245-3

youngest students in their halls, hugging and giving handshakes as the group diminishes and classes begin.

—*Field Notes, October 15, 2013*

Space, Place, and Schooling

The vignette above, like all stories, is an entanglement of space and place, an example of the gnarled relations in schools and communities that are always already at play (Glissant, 1986; Helfenbein, 2021; Nespor, 1997). Place, defined here as a "complex network of social interactions and mental conceptualizations inside of a physical space" (Fataar, 2019, p. 26), is imbued with power relations that are at play within and across scales (Massey, 2005). Similarly, spaces are the "multiplicities that emerge from . . . spheres of possibility in contemporaneous plurality . . . the interrelations, as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny" (Massey, 2005, pp. 9–10). From a critical geographic perspective, spaces and places are never apolitical (Foucault, 1980; Helfenbein, 2021; Massey, 2005). They are therefore interrelated through socially constructed norms and values that can shift, build, and deterritorialize their mutually coconstituted identities. Without place, the ontological and epistemological relations of space are altered (Harvey, 1973; Helfenbein, 2021; Soja, 2010). It is through space and place that the ways of being, knowing, and doing of local actors engage in meaning making in the mattering of human and nonhuman bodies (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Love, 2019; Tuan, 1977).

Within spaces and places, boundaries and borders exist in fluid states of being that are formed, dispersed, reimagined, and refused. The social construction of borders and boundaries can be understood as part of the place-making process that is embedded in a web of history and politics (Anzaldúa, 1987; Massey, 1993). Helfenbein (2021) argued that social structures de/reterritorialized through spaces and places are both incorporeal and material. In other words, borders have material grounding. Navigating these borders, then, is inherently an act of agency. Helfenbein (2010) further states that if boundaries and borders "speak, leak and have possibility" (p. 305), the spaces and places that create these structures are similarly fluid and imbued with ordinary affects—from hope, joy, and love to despair, hatred, and sorrow, to combinations of these and everything in between.

Understanding the multiple, nested ways that spaces and places are used, felt, and constructed can be a difficult task. One challenge is that ways of being, knowing, and doing are always emergent, even when they may seem immutable. Karen Barad (2007) argues that agency emerges from within events, or intra-actions, not outside of them. Following posthumanist and new materialist theories (e.g., Barad, 2007; Snaza et al., 2016; Truman, 2021), I argue that the multiplicities of space, and their relations within place, are constantly de- and reterritorialized (Ayers et al., 2017; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) through phenomena. This is not to

say that power is not somehow ubiquitous, but rather to attend to the impact that bodies have on each other as they move in, through, and between scales.

In terms of research, it is often difficult to unpack the tangled knots of spaces and places (Nespor, 1997) because, practically speaking, it is impossible for a researcher to be everywhere or perceive everything. She can never encounter every experience alongside local actors, nor can she expect to become a part of every potential space or to experience them through the same lens as participants. Despite painstaking work not to get it all wrong (Wolcott, 1990), the data will always be, in some way, a positioned narrative (Ange, 1996; Geertz, 1973). For these and related such reasons, attending to space and place can often help to make unspoken and tacit understandings more explicit. One way to attend to these and other intersections of space, place, identity, and experiences is through mapping (Harmon, 2003; Norris et al., 2020; Wood, 2010).

In this study, mapping was used as a tool to better understand the nuances of the many positioned "truths" that compose the everyday for students of color in the context of school.[2] These maps serve not only as "directional tools" but also as a means to document "socio-geographical notions of place, social relationships . . . and participant perspectives" (Powell, 2010, p. 543). The maps presented here are both visual drawings that students created to represent their experience at the school and auditory maps of the building that students recorded. The purpose of the auditory maps was not only to record and share experiences while standing in the places that they occurred but also transformed over time as students would request to use the recorders almost like an auditory journal, reflecting on and speaking back to spaces and places in the building. These two representations are both ocular, bringing the researcher and reader "directly to the context of representation" (Pink, 2007, p. 16), and sonic, foregrounding participant voice in a way that "maps a student in relation to the spaces and places that inform his identity" (Gershon, 2013, p. 12). In sum, these maps represent the sensuous experiences of the everyday.

What follows is an analysis of the spaces and places that students of color mapped—both visually and sonically—at Milford High. While the majority of maps were made by students of color within this predominantly white context, other students (including an out white lesbian, a white Jewish girl, an openly racist white cishetero boy, and a white cishetero girl) also participated in the project, allowing me to more fully outline commonsense understandings of the school. To be clear, white students who participated in this study were not a control against which students of color were measured but instead were present to provide context in enunciating those commonplace understandings at Milford. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that while the term "students of color" broadly defines the group, students from African American, biracial, and Latinx backgrounds were all represented. No matter their particular combination of histories and experiences, students often performed mainstream representations of

sociocultural ideas and ideals about urban African American adolescents. Therefore, my goal here is not to untangle the knot of schooling but rather to look at the intersections within that knot (Nespor, 1997): the borders and boundaries, and their intraconnected spaces and places, that were presented by students within the context of Milford.

Understanding how anyone, but as is especially resonant here, students of color, negotiates identity, power, knowing, and being in school is messy business. As noted above, spaces are always intraconnected. Therefore, the process of teasing apart a particular place, while helpful for analysis, can falsely isolate parts of a context that are impossibly entwined with other parts. However, just as it would be difficult to understand a forest without looking at any singular tree, the maps presented here are frames (Agar, 1996) of the school that help build to understandings of the larger picture. The collected auditory maps share common places in the school that students chose to discuss; these places are presented below through sound files that are representative of the overall data. Further, it should be noted that pseudonyms for all students heard in the maps are not included with every track. This book is particularly focused on student voice, so this is not a move intended to take away any aspect of identity from the voices heard. Their stories together indicate iterative patterns in the school that are represented through the files. However, for clarity on the speakers and their relation to transcribed conversations, all voices, along with links to the files, are identified by pseudonym in the Appendix.

Little Africa, Houses, and Safe Spaces

In terms of scale, the school totals 545,600 square feet and is about a quarter-mile walk from one end to the other. The building is split into two academic wings that are separated by several cafeteria spaces and two auditoriums. The wings are labeled the "green house" and the "white house" after the school colors, green and white. After my time with The Crew, it became clear that exclusionary jokes about who could learn on the "white side" were fairly prolific among the roughly 2,400 students. In addition, staff participants also commented on the innuendo of the "white side" of the building. For example, Figure 2.1 was explicitly pointed out to me by both students and staff as they noted the potentially inconsiderate nature of the signs. Faculty specifically described distress over the administration's indifferent response when concerns were raised regarding the labels of the "houses." These jests were facilitated by the fact that the "white house" was the side of the building that benefited from new construction and related upgrades. When the building was renovated, the new structure was literally constructed around the old building, leaving most classrooms on the "green side" with rooms that, while renovated, lacked windows and had consistently leaky ceilings and associated issues with mold.

FIGURE 2.1 "White Guidance Office" sign, showing students where to go on the "white" side of the building for guidance counselors

Little Africa is on the furthest tip of the green side of the building. As heard in the sound files below, it became clear through numerous participant interviews that the name "Little Africa" was a longstanding tradition that was recognized by both students and staff, regardless of race, as a place where students of color were consistently present. Since the "green house" was part of the original building, I asked veteran teachers who had been employed at the school prior to the renovations and building addition about the presence of Little Africa. The history of this space was confirmed among every staff member—from teachers to custodians to cafeteria workers. They unanimously noted that Little Africa had not only been present for the decade since the building addition but had existed for as long as they could recall.

Although the name "Little Africa" seems to have been created and disseminated by white students, students of color discussed it as a familiar place across the surrounding Black and brown community. Specifically, each student who chose to spend time in Little Africa gave a similar narrative that described an older sibling or other family member telling them about the location as a "safe place" to meet other Black and brown students when they began their high school experience. Davonte, for example, relayed a story from his older sister, who told him that Little Africa should be his "first stop in high school so [he] would find [his] people, friendly faces, and a place to breathe before becoming one of the few chocolate sprinkles on a whole bowl of vanilla ice cream."

Even though it was considered a place to find community and comradery, every student in the study remarked that they were aware of how the place was surveilled. Often in the morning and consistently in the afternoon, administrators

would stand directly across the hall from Little Africa. While some students discussed a desire to move Little Africa, several members of The Crew explained that moving was not in their best interest for several reasons. First, as Roy explained, the location was "tradition and messing with that might mess with people's ability to find safety when they first come." Roy, along with participants across genders, were aware of and took seriously the need to preserve Little Africa for future generations. Second, some students felt that if they moved, administration would follow them. So the "problem would just move with [them]," Davonte noted, adding that they "might as well work within the system [they] are given." Finally, students were clear that the position of Little Africa gave students of color the options to either leave the building or slip into classrooms or the restroom as ways to escape administrative surveillance. As discussed in Chapter 5, the ability to relocate for some privacy was highly dependent on cultural capital, such as that of gender or connections to school-sanctioned athletics.

Although generally marked as a safe space that students discussed as highly surveilled, the visibility of Black and brown students in Little Africa opened the space up to explicit racism. For example, as seen in Figure 2.2, at one point a white student wrote the "N-word" on the Milford banner closest to Little Africa. As students of color explained, no consequences were given to the student who wrote it and no action was taken to remove this language that was publicly displayed. Perhaps worse, despite a participant explaining that she had complained to an administrator, the sign remained up throughout the duration of this study (see Figure 2.2). This sign was displayed in the main hallway, where cameras were present, directly across from where the administrators stood each afternoon. The participant who had complained expressed frustration, remarking that it's "not like [the principals] don't see the damn thing. Plus they *knew* it was there. I told them. They didn't take it down. They didn't cover it up. They just left it. Maybe to remind us of who we are here. Maybe because they are lazy. Who knows. Who cares. It just hurts that they let it go."

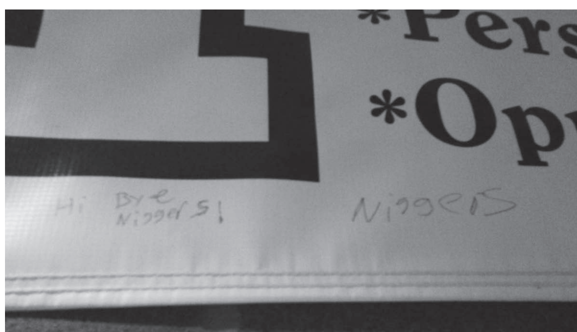


FIGURE 2.2 Defaced sign above Little Africa

The population of Little Africa varied throughout the day. At times, I arrived to find only an empty hallway and staircase awaiting the company of students between classes—or sometimes during classes, when students found quiet moments to meet. The number of youth spending time there also varied from two or three to as many as twenty. When discussing events that transpired in Little Africa, I frequently refer to the "underlife of the institution" (Goffman, 1961).[3] Aligned with Goffman's discussion of the underlife of an institution, I use this term to describe the many ways that students enacted agency within and against systems of schooling to push back at the institution's power and authority.

Institutions, like all places, have an identity and are structurally imbued with sociopolitical and cultural iterations of power (Hall, 1977; Meiners, 2016). Schools are but one example of state-sanctioned places that carry out the everyday processes of the nation-state (Dixon-Román, 2017; Hall, 1977; McLaren, 2002). As such, they are expressly built on intrarelated policies, norms, and values that are designed to maintain the status quo. The underlife of an institution, as Goffman argues, responds to these embedded structural iterations of normalized values. Goffman describes two primary forms of resistance. The first is a "goal to radically change the status quo" whereas the second seeks to "subvert the status quo by working within and around the institution" (Constantino & Faltis, 1998, p. 115). Students like The Crew regularly worked to change the status quo for other students, while students throughout the subsequent study focused on subverting within the system. In many cases, both forms of resistance were impossibly entwined as students of color negotiated their lives at Milford.

Adding to Goffman's work, I attend not only to questions of resistance but also to how refusal is integral to enacting forms of agency within sociopolitical contexts. I build on McGranahan's (2016) argument that resistance is theoretically linked to refusal. Refusal, however, emphasizes sociopolitical and historical movements that attend to staking a claim of identity as way to reject the system rather than those seeking a relational friction (Tsing, 2005) with the system. As McGranahan argues, "Refusal marks the point of a limit having been reached" (p. 319) and is expressed against sociopolitical norms and values. Students not only regularly resisted systems of oppression in Goffman's sense of the underlife, but many times also refused to submit to them. To be clear, this is not an either/or dichotomy between refusal and resistance, as students of color consistently negotiated a "point of limit" as it related to being at Milford and as it was knotted up within broader systems of schooling. Although refusal is an idea that was taken up throughout this study as a form of negotiating local structures of oppression, resistance also provided students with a generative form of agency within points of friction. Finally, refusal can be understood as a form of disengagement with a structure that opens up possibilities within the structure itself while attending to histories and positionalities that are traditionally silenced (Simpson, 2014). However, just as there is no outside of power (Foucault, 1978), questions

of refusal—specifically for whom, when, and where refusal is possible—is always already subject to conditions and degrees of privilege.

As I thought about how students exercised agency in their responses to forms of oppression through resistance and refusal, I also consider how intra-actions coconstituted agency within existing structures. This meant that, while sometimes they created wiggle room within the underlife, students' actions did not often radically change the status quo. Aligned with Barad's (2007) discussion of how agency emerges from within events, their actions and reactions to and against oppression did manage to create a relatively safe space against racialized institutional expectations of being, knowing, and doing in school. Returning to the vignette that started this chapter, one could reflect on the boys' dancing as an act of resistance in the form of a performance (Goffman, 1959). Such performances can be understood as both a display of one's personal ontoepistemologies and as functioning as a negotiation of broader sociocultural contexts. While students' resistance against the structure of schooling did not necessarily change the broader school culture, it did open spaces for them to relax into their own ways of being and community during school hours. This is no small accomplishment, as the wiggle room allows students the ability to form safe spaces within an institution where such places may otherwise be unavailable.[4]

The rest of this chapter discusses students' use of these safe spaces as well as how they negotiated the corridors and the underlife of the school. I begin by talking about students' experiences in the morning, focusing on two locations: the hallway that was historically named by students and faculty as "Little Africa" and the cafeteria, which students in this study discussed as an extension of Little Africa. Although there is an inherent tension between the fact that the corridor is much more frequently utilized than the cafeteria by students of color, the (lack of) distinction between these two places and naming of them is clear among students' narratives and actions, and therefore both are claimed as "Little Africa" below. I begin with the morning use of these two places not only for chronological fluidity of the narrative but also because girls and boys of color tended to be together and interact in the morning, versus the single-gender groups that emerged in the afternoon. The following section focuses on boys of color and their experiences throughout the day in the corridors of the school and in Little Africa. Next, I discuss girls' experiences as they are interrelated to those of boys but unique in their perspective of gendered Othering. Finally, I discuss sexual orientation as it relates to students across genders in Little Africa.

Little Africa: Morning Places, Community Spaces

Little Africa is a place. For generations, it has had two recognized locations at Milford High. The first, and the place that most students recognized as the "main" Little Africa, was located at the stairs[5] across from the gym in the school's main hallway. This place was utilized during and after school hours. The second place

was the first set of round tables in the cafeteria.[6] This was used only during breakfast. While many students of color were on the free/reduced-cost lunch program, only eight students were able to get to school in time to catch breakfast before the cafeteria closed for the morning. About fifteen minutes before the morning bell rang, the students who ate breakfast, and any others who happened to join them, would make their way to the stairs to join the growing "main" group before the morning bell.

Little Africa, like all places, is not ahistorical (Butler & Sinclair, 2020; Sharpe, 2016). It is imbued with what Winfield (2007) calls a collective memory, or a past that is partially constructed and remembered through social relations. The collective memory of Little Africa, like all forms of enacted and hidden curricula, is shared across groups who traverse the space. In this case, that means that the collective memory—while not always aligned in terms of meaning of the space—was shared among students, faculty, staff, and administration, regardless of their intersecting and divergent identities. This history has an accompanying in-group identity (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Massey, 2005; Tuan, 1977), one that is (re)created each year by returning and new students of color. To most students of color in the school, Little Africa serves as a place and space of community (Soja, 2010), providing safety and comfort in numbers but not homogeneity. In Sierra's auditory map, for example, she shifts between "we" and "they" language, showing a degree of cognitive dissonance with some members of the morning group. Indeed, in-group difference was no small factor in the relations and relationships between students of color. The students who spent time in Little Africa had identities that varied widely in terms of gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, and race.

Little Africa also had an identity that was constructed by other participants and local actors, such as administration,[7] staff,[8] and white students.[9] Although there are many factors across sociocultural precepts that shaped dominant ideas about Little Africa, most white participants noted that the students who spent their time as in-group members of that space were "resistant to broader school culture," as one white teacher explained. Little Africa was therefore often viewed by white participants as a place that embodied resistance, resilience, and refusal to dominant ways of being, knowing, and doing.

The fact that Little Africa occupies two places, the cafeteria and the stairs, does not take away its identity or sense of *placeness* (Ellis, 2005; Light & Smith, 1998). Following Sharpe's (2016) and Tuan's (1977) discussions on place having felt value, Little Africa exists in two areas that were habitual sites of activity for students of color in general and, more specifically, for participants in this study. Both individual and group members were involved in, and in some ways responsible for, the multiple creations of the place (Ellis, 2005). Through this collaborative process of place making, each year students of color create and recreate two places that are named "Little Africa," as well as their sociocultural and political space in the school.

It is important to note that because Little Africa occupied two physical places in the building, time was an important factor in the construction of their space and place (Erickson, 2004). During lunch periods, for example, students did not sit at the same set of tables or refer to the tables they used during lunch as Little Africa. After breakfast, and during all other times of the day, Little Africa is only located by the stairs. Additionally, as heard in the clips above from the teacher and white students, Little Africa is identified by those outside of the in-group as only existing by the stairs. Over the length of the study, administrators, teachers, and white students consistently failed to recognize the cafeteria in the morning as "Little Africa." These distinctions are important because, as discussed in greater detail below, the identities of each iteration of Little Africa served similar purposes around questions of being and blackness for students of color.

The vignette at the beginning of this chapter begins in the hall by the gym (see Figure 2.3). However, if you were to rewind the clock fifteen minutes, many students would have been in the cafeteria that day, either eating breakfast or joining the regular group of eight students. When I entered the cafeteria in the mornings, the sound of registers clacking and the distinct beeping sound of students inputting their cafeteria codes to buy food functioned like an alarm clock.

The cafeteria is generally quieter in the morning than at lunch, with only those students on free/reduced-price meals or those who missed breakfast at home stopping in for a snack. Sitting in segregated groups, three main cliques populated the tables that seem to have been claimed for each group long before any of these students began high school. The cliques seemed to be divided among students of color, a group of white students who were on free/reduced-cost meals, and a small cluster of LGBTGNQIA2S+ students. Following Tatum (2003), these clusters are as much about community as they are about identity. Groups did not avoid contact with each other and occasionally one member would interrupt a particularly loud conversation from another group with a jocular exchange. The students of color largely arrived in groups that walked together from their shared neighborhoods. As time approached for class to begin, the group of students of color would often have swelled to a critical mass around the limited seats at the table, and many of them made their way to the main hallway, some still eating breakfast from their Styrofoam trays as they walked.

The comfortable morning ritual of community appeared to bring a sense of calm as the students started the day. Any disputes between group members was momentarily put on hold and chatter about the previous night, homework due that day, and trepidation about going to classes dominated the conversations. On occasion, the school police officer monitored the cafeteria in the morning but generally there were no teachers or administrators in this place besides those who passed through to get to a classroom or office.

One student, Daniel, compared his relationship to the cafeteria staff to that of a mother and son.[10] In a follow-up interview, Daniel and another student, Sam,

FIGURE 2.3 Male participants' maps of the main hallway, with special notes made to mark the girls' restrooms, the gym, and the door to exit the building

elaborated on their morning interactions and the importance of the relationship between cafeteria staff and students of color:

BW: Tell me more about your morning routine. I mean, you enter the building in the morning, eat breakfast and hang out with your friends. Is that right?

Sam: Pretty much. Except some of us are not that great of friends, you know. But we're all on team dark skin. Gotta look out for that first. That and food. (Laughs). We can always handle our shit later.

BW: Why set it aside for that moment? Why not "handle your shit" right then?

Sam: First of all, nigga knows not to get café privileges taken away.[11] Don't even know if they can do that but don't wanna find out. And, I'm not tryin' to make trouble there.

BW: Are there better places where you can "make trouble"?

Sam: I dunno. I guess so. Just not there. Not in the morning. I'm just trying to get my pancakes up in here! And milk! Playa can't forget da milk.

BW: Only in the morning? What about during lunch? Can you make trouble during lunch?

Sam: Lunch is different. Other kids are there. Damn crackers. Lunch is just . . . different.

BW: Daniel, you mentioned in one of your maps that the cafeteria ladies are like moms who should teach. Why is that?

Daniel: Yes, well they feed us, first of all . . . Like moms do. But more than that, even if they don't always agree with us, they let us be ourselves. Moms do that too, well . . . Sometimes. They take care of you, tell you when to knock it off but still love you in the end.

Sam: Yeah, and they should be teachers. Why can't teachers have that same respect? I see them [teachers] in the morning. Sometimes you say "hi" to them and they act like they don't even know you. Why they gotta be that way? Not like I won't see you in a few hours.

When asked about the presence of students of color in the morning, Jenny, a middle aged, white cafeteria employee,[12] responded that she thought if students of color "felt they had somewhere to go where they wouldn't be judged or under the thumb of authority . . . they would relate much better to adults." In a sense, the cafeteria and its employees offer basic sustenance to students before beginning their day—both in terms of food and emotional recognition—and are therefore identified by students of color as an iteration of Little Africa. Students therefore identified both the cafeteria and the stairs as places that offered spaces of care and respect. The cafeteria was not only a place where students felt they "wouldn't be judged," but also a place where, in conjunction with respect for the cafeteria workers, they did not have to engage in the performativity of blackness (Fleetwood, 2010; hooks, 1992; Johnson, 2003).

In terms of time and timing, cafeteria workers may have also provided the same kind of surveillance as administrators later in the day. However, in part because of the generally positive relationship that cafeteria employees held with students of color and in part due to the different level of authority they represented, the surveillance in the cafeteria was perceived by students as less official, and potentially less punitive, than administrative surveillance. Practically, this means that students were given a space to "be" themselves in the mornings while still receiving some degree of surveillance by staff—a sense of independence under watchful eyes.

As students moved from the cafeteria and toward the stairs by the gym each day, the hallways would begin to swell with the white students who comprise the overwhelming majority of the student population at Milford High. Some of the students of color, mostly girls, would break away from the group and head toward the restroom or their classes on the other side of the building. Because Little Africa is on the far part of the "green side," only a few students who had morning classes on the "white side" of the building would touch base at the stairs. Often, a part of the group would break off to, as they explained, do a "walk through" to "see what's up" on the lower level of the green side. The groups would then intersect by the stairs and resume conversation for a few minutes until the morning song played for classes to begin.

"Being" Something and the Performativity of Blackness

Little Africa is most often populated by small groups of students of color throughout the day. At times, male students of color utilized the space to give quick hugs or high fives between class periods. Other times, they used Little Africa as a place to resist being in the places designated by their schedules, such as study hall or class. Generally, I observed boys of color stopping by Little Africa as a meeting place prior to wandering the building, looking into classrooms to wave at friends, or occasionally stopping by the cafeteria for a snack, as lunch periods were not strictly monitored.

The habit of wandering the building positioned boys of color for a particular kind of visibility. Being in a predominantly white school, racial markers of difference became makers of presence. By this I mean that student-of-color differences from the white norm became marked as a presence easily observed by other students and staff. These markers could be anything from the color of one's skin to the way the student walked or spoke. Second, as the boys wandered the halls, there was a correlation between an individual's frequency of wandering and their visibility. Perhaps as a result of these factors, boys of color might be stopped with either a simple "Where are you going?" or, if they were found habitually wandering, with more aggressive tones. Below is a combination of segments from one auditory mapping session. The full session included three students and lasted about twenty minutes; the included excerpts begin with the boys discussing an assistant principal who, among students of color, has a reputation for hardline practices.

Sound File: Getting Stopped[13]

This file is representative of what happens when male students of color were in the halls during class periods. In this clip, the students were either giving up their study hall periods to participate in the auditory mapping project for this study or, in the case of the one student who had an early release schedule and had not yet left the building, giving up their personal time. As one can hear, one student's name was accidentally omitted from the pass, as he arrived to my room just as the others were leaving to work on the project. This student had also developed a pattern of refusing to leave school despite his early release schedule. While his habits seemed well known and objectionable among administrators, interviews with staff members who regularly monitored the halls during that class period revealed that no formal administrative instructions to "keep an eye out" for this student had been specified.

Perhaps more significantly, when white participants mapped the building during either the same period or any other times during the day, they were not stopped once during the course of the academic year. Finally, Black male

students specifically articulated that they felt they were "always in trouble" but that "no one could hear it." This affective dissonance to student experiences on the part of faculty and administration often left Black youth feeling frustrated and silenced. Given the opportunity to "be heard," as Charles once explained, with a recorder and the chance to document their time in the hallway, it is possible, though not likely, that the boys actively tried to cross paths with administrators or staff. This decision may have been partially in their control, but the decision to stop a student or to address them with harsh tones was not. Later, one of the boys poignantly explained, "What is the difference between being a Black man who is stopped more by cops outside of here (school) and being stopped so much by teachers or principals inside? It's like training for being Black in the real world!"

Sound File: Making Bets[14]

Students of color frequently vocalized their frustration with the practices of teachers who monitored the hallways. Their concerns focused on the disproportionate number of stops they encountered compared to their white peers rather than the inconvenience of being momentarily detained. Similarly, a significant amount of research has documented racialized inequities in schools, including in student arrests, punishments, and zero-tolerance policies (e.g., Christle et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2010; Kozol, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Love, 2019; Smith et al., 2009). While the consequences of a negative permanent school record or, worse, a juvenile record, are certainly more detrimental to students of color than being stopped in a hallway, students in this case were nonetheless responding to a similar undercurrent of injustice.

The understanding that students of color were a minority at Milford was so prevalent among staff that few questioned how schooling might change if racial percentages were inversed and cultural norms varied.[15] The teachers in the clip "Getting Stopped" were clear that they work hard to enforce policies equally, regardless of race. Further, both teachers had reputations as coaches for being hard, yet fair, in their roles as athletic leaders in the district. Rather than their personal views on race, what I attend to here is a pattern that students of color encounter daily, part of the hidden curriculum and therefore possibly unknown to staff members in their participation in broader school culture. For example, the male staff member, Mr. DeVitis, who stopped the boys to check their pass was most likely unaware of the previous encounter that had just occurred, and certainly could not know about the imminence of the third stop. His tone, which aligned with the stern-yet-playful nature of many male coaches in the building, may have been perceived differently by the students who endured continuous stops in the hall. This lack of awareness of broader context shows how the hidden curriculum of the school proliferated in ways that were certainly raced, if not racist, through individual acts of carrying out official procedures that are common to schooling.

A fourth adult, Mr. Keen, could also originally be heard on this file. However, during the member check portion of this study, he asked to have his portion pulled as he was afraid it sounded "too racist." Despite his feelings on this one file, Mr. Keen did agree to continue his participation in the study. In follow-up interviews, he expressed his experiences as a teacher and a coach with certain institutional policies, like cutting bussing or a fee of over $600 for students to play sports with no family cap, that were potentially marginalizing to students of color and certainly ostracizing to economically disenfranchised students. He articulated working hard to help all students, regardless of race, but expressed frustration when students of color stereotyped themselves through their actions or gave up when peer pressure from the community pushed them toward failure.

The school-to-prison pipeline (Christle et al., 2005; Fasching-Varner et al., 2014) demonstrates the inequities in school that negatively affect students of color and the LGBTGNQIA2S+ population. Although not all marginalized students are affected by this pipeline, it does predominantly impact students of color. Specifically, students in marginalized populations tend to receive higher rates of discipline than their peers, sending them down a track toward juvenile detention and, eventually, adult forms of incarceration (Christle et al., 2005; Meiners, 2016). The school-to-prison pipeline currently functions as it was "intended—to disenfranchise many (predominantly people of color) for the benefit of some (mostly white)" (Fasching-Varner et al., 2014, p. 410). As a result, racial disparities function as indicators of failure in school, encouraging further racialized patterns of discipline, school funding, and pedagogical approaches (Irizarry & Raible, 2014). Additionally, schools in urban contexts tend to receive less funding and the physical buildings tend to resemble prisons in their layout and increased security presence (Christle et al., 2005). Although scholars who study the school-to-prison pipeline have thoroughly described the inequities in punishments, school facilities, and funding levels between students of color and their white peers, this scholarship generally does not focus on the daily inequities and microaggressions (Smith et al., 2011) that contribute to these statistics. Whether these racialized pressures are embodied through a joke between friends (e.g., "Making Bets") or internalized after being removed from a context despite a legitimate pass (e.g., "Getting Stopped"), the pipeline often begins in the minutia of the everyday.

The enacted curriculum resides in the tensions of ordinary affects that are embodied within the negotiations of sociocultural contexts. The interactions between staff and students of color in these moments are therefore not only tied to the daily experiences that contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline but also, and just as importantly, to the enacted curriculum of the school. Rather than how this term is often used at the classroom level, I describe enacted curriculum at the school level. As such, in these corridors, an enacted curriculum of racial profiling occurred daily. As the enacted curriculum involves all participants, it should be noted that students of color were not passive and, in fact, contributed to this curriculum through their daily performativity of blackness.

Because this pedagogy of injustice is often enacted in public places (i.e., the main halls), it affects not only students of color's epistemologies but also those of their white peers. While it does not demonstrate what whites could not do—for they could do the very things that their African American or biracial peers do without getting into trouble, a point to which I return later—it does contribute to an understanding of how students of color are constructed as likely either "bad" or "in trouble" and white students as "good" (Gershon, 2017).

Notes

1. To hear this file, go to: https://youtu.be/64n-t9Sw7F0
2. It is important to note that while the traditional and contemporary forms of this method are employed to unpack sociocultural spaces and places, the use of a map does not divorce the reality of a partitioned truth from data collected or its analysis. In the same sense that presenting audio files opens a space for transparency in representation, it must be noted that even these files are edited. They are not edited to construct narratives. Rather, they are edited in terms of removing identifying information and, in some rare cases, removing some background noise like wind to bring forward the voices. In keeping with contemporary ethnographic practices, what is presented here is an attempt to be transparent not only in the files chosen but also within the contextualization of those files.
3. I also recognize the potentially problematic nature of the language associated with "underlife" for marginalized student populations. I use the term here not only in alignment with other work across the social sciences but also to draw further attention to how the students positioned themselves and were positioned by broader sociopolitical and cultural ideas and ideals as marginalized.
4. The idea of a "safe space" can be incredibly problematic, in that safety within systems of violence is precarious and still exists in relation to broader oppressions. However, the idea of safe space here is meant to reflect on how students used agency to carve out some relief from the negative experiences they had at school. However temporary they might seem, their creation was, is, and continues to be important.
5. To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_Stairs.mp3
6. To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_Cafe.mp3
7. To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_Admin.mp3
8. To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_Teacher.mp3
9. To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_White-Students.mp3
10. To listen to this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Daniel-Cafe.wav
11. As I quote participants, I have decided not to edit their words. This means that the N-word and other epithets are used as participants intended through their interviews and maps.

12 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Cafe-Staff.mp3

13 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Getting-stopped.mp3

14 To listen to this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/making-bets.mp3

15 My use of the word "minority" is intentional. The purpose is twofold: First, I use it literally, to describe that there were numerically fewer students of color at Milford than their white peers. Second, I use it to draw attention to how faculty and administration used the term to avoid discussing questions of marginalization. When it came to accommodations, students of color were discussed as a "minority population," rather than "marginalized students" who might need certain accommodations in the interest of equity and access. Instead, "minority" was often used to diminish the importance of serving such a small percentage of the population.

3

NO AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL

The hidden and enacted curricula are often central to one's socioemotional development. This is especially true in schools as young people develop their sense of self in relation to school culture, local community, and less-local people, bodies, and cultures. Goffman (1961) suggested that our ways of being, knowing, and doing become evident not through conformity but through exercising agency expressed through resistance and refusal (Schwalbe, 1993). Goffman writes that:

> total commitment and attachment to any social unit implies a kind of selflessness. Our sense of being a person can come from being drawn into a wider social unit; our sense of selfhood can arise through the little ways in which we resist the pull. Our status is backed by the solid buildings of the world, while our sense of personal identity often resides in the cracks.
>
> *(p. 305)*

Little Africa was not only a place of community where the diversity of identities within the group could be observed but forms of resistance and refusal were discussed and expressed.

There are many groups that congregate after school in Little Africa. While white students and staff tend to classify all students of color that spend time in Little Africa as one cohort, clear lines existed between different clusters (e.g., "White Students").[1] As anthropologists and sociologists have noted, there is always greater in-group than between-group difference (Rahder, 2020; Tatum, 2003; Varenne & McDermott, 1998). These groups did mingle, as I often observed, when one or two young men of color split off to talk to young women of color. Little Africa could therefore be understood as containing separate factions that functioned with/in the larger alliance that participants generally recognized as necessary

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245-4

for physical and emotional safety. Or, as one student, Sierra, explained, "There's strength in numbers, right? Sometimes, despite fighting, we fall back into our numbers. For safety, not because we always like each other."

Although the last chapter focused on Little Africa as territorialized between two spaces in the morning—the cafeteria and at the bottom of the stairs—this chapter considers the ebb and flow of Little Africa when it becomes one place—by the stairs—in the afternoon. My reason for separating the bookends of the day is twofold. As aforementioned, Little Africa in the afternoon is significantly different in terms of space and place. Not only is it constituted by one rather than two spaces but also, in the afternoon, it is far more splintered in terms of in-group dynamics. In the morning, students wandered from the cafeteria or the car/bus drop-off areas and congregated in one group for a few minutes before class. Because students trickled in at different times, the size of the morning group was far smaller. In the afternoon, students were all dismissed at the same time by the closing bell, and many had more time after school than they did in the morning. There was therefore a greater ability to congregate in a large group. Although false binaries in gender can be harmful to genderqueer students, participants generally ascribed to a clear gender-based divide in the afternoon.

Toward the end of the last class period, students with an early-release schedule began to congregate at the bottom of the stairs. If administrators were present, they would often find places to meet near the stairs until the closing bell rang to avoid punishment for being in the halls during class. The early-release program was only available to third- or fourth-year students, who were able to schedule their classes early in the day and, rather than attend a study hall, were permitted to leave campus when finished in the afternoon. One condition of early release was that the student must leave school property for the day. Some students eligible for early release still returned to school, either to participate in after-school activities or to have time with their friends at the end of the day. Following early-release protocol, many students left campus to work or go home for a few hours first. Others found places in the school to hide out until the end of the day. Some students were on their way in for a night school program, which began in the early evening in the green wing of the building.

The initial group that formed most afternoons was almost entirely composed of African American or biracial-identifying boys. The deep hum of their conversation was often punctuated by laughter or the squeal of tennis shoes as they shoved each other lightly, engaging in what they identified in interviews as displays of masculinity. After the final bell rang, the halls would quickly become crowded and their voices drowned out by the bodies that moved around and, in some cases through, the group. Small clusters of two or three students of color coming from different parts of the building would join this initial group, and Little Africa would swell to a size twice as large as it had been in the morning.

As the group reached a critical mass that encroached on the hallway, it would split into smaller parts. Closest to the exit, a group of about fifteen male students

of color met regularly. Many of these students participated in athletics. The group generally stayed close to the wall where the gym doors are located. Students in sports that were actively meeting for practice would greet their friends, stay to talk for a minute, then duck into the gym to change into athletic wear for practice. After a moment, they would reappear, dressed for exercise, and stand with the main group until practice began. Students who did not participate in athletics often ventured as far as the doorway of the gym, sometimes pushing each other in as a joke, but generally stayed within the confines of the hallway.

Cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) is a kind of social asset that promotes sociocultural mobility. In the case of male students of color, participating in athletics garnered strong cultural capital not only between group members but within the school in general. At times, an athlete would tease a student who had been pushed into the gym by a third student. The athlete's mocking comments would often be punctuated by flaunting the cultural capital they had garnered through participation in sports. At one point, for example, Antonne pushed Jahmir into the gym; neither boy participated in any extracurricular activities. Johnathan, who was a varsity basketball player, took the opportunity to remind Jahmir that he did not belong in the gym by yelling, "What the fuck, man? I don't see you on the court! What makes you think you can be up in my place, bitch?" In response, as was sometimes the case, Jahmir took off into the gym and engaged in a quick scuffle with Johnathan. More often, though, retaliation was enacted against the student who as not an athlete. In other words, Jahmir was far more likely to retaliate against Antonne than Johnathan. These minor altercations usually ended quickly and without further escalation.

The cultural capital that students of color gained from athletics did not exist in isolation. Such capital was significant between in-group members and out-group students, faculty, and administration. Milford High, like many suburban schools across the United States, valued its strong athletic program, often above the accomplishments of other school-sanctioned organizations. Each year, for example, the halls of the four academic wings were decorated for homecoming week. While each grade level was able to participate in the decorations, students from various sports explained how their groups were solicited to have a voice in the process. Similarly, each year the school brought in an annual motivational speaker. Coaches were asked to pick a student representative to participate in focus-group sessions after the large assembly. The year this study was conducted, the school brought in a speaker to talk to the student body about depression, self-harm, and suicide. As a teacher who worked with the Genders and Sexualities Alliance, I asked if I could choose some student representatives, many of whom had engaged in self-harm or dealt with depression from bullying, to participate in the small group sessions with the speaker. I was told that the spots were reserved for "big groups recognized across the school rather than smaller groups that only served a few students."

As described in Chapter 4, cultural capital for girls and boys of color who were athletes was disproportionate, with young men of color garnering more capital than

their young women counterparts. This did not apply to white students who, regardless of gender, benefited for their participation in sports. To be clear, disproportional funding and praise between men's and women's athletics existed, with sports like men's football and basketball garnering far more support than, say, women's lacrosse. However, this is an attention to the sociopolitical wiggle room afforded to white athletes in general. For example, most sports had "spirit days" where team members dressed similarly. This varied from days where students wore their team uniforms to school, to occasions where students dressed in business casual outfits in recognition of an upcoming game. One girls' team had an annual "dress like a homeless person day." Two white, freshman participants came to school in brown face, messy hair, and tattered, clashing clothes (Figure 3.1).[2] Although they were seen by multiple teachers and walked through the main hallway in the morning, it was not until the end of the second class that they were asked to wipe the makeup off their faces.

In defense of their actions, students consented to their photo being taken and showed me group texts where their parents, who helped them dress in the

FIGURE 3.1 Student athlete in brown face

morning, were upset because their children's attire was censored by the school. Breaking my role as an observer, I explained that this was blatant racism and I agreed with the demand to wash their faces. Black and brown participants who saw these outfits and attended to the events closely that morning relayed that, as far as they could surmise, the only punishment received was to be asked to remove the makeup, but not change their clothes. This was in stark contrast to an incident where a female tennis player of color was sent home for wearing a skirt that broke dress code when her team captain required her teammates to "dress classy" for an upcoming match. I observed several white teammates that day wearing skirts of similar length that seemed to go undisturbed by faculty or administration.

As a final example, the hallway where Little Africa was located was lined with photos of athletes and teams that had made state finals. Although the school boasted a nationally recognized debate team, no pictures were taken to document the club's annual accomplishments. Colloquially, this area of the school was called the "wall of fame" and the photos of the athletes on the wall were particularly guarded by the administration and valued by the students. Any defacement of the photos would certainly warrant immediate punishment. This protection was divergent from other defacement in the hallway, as in the example of the N-word on a sign discussed in the proceeding chapter (Figure 2.2).

The cultural capital garnered by participation in athletics was openly noted by some male students of color who explained that, while they were as likely as their nonathletic peers to be stopped or get into trouble, they knew the trouble would be less severe if they were athletes. Da'von, for example, noted,

> It's crazy, you know? The better I am in the field, the less trouble I can get into. Not because what they think. They think it's because I'm spending my time in sports and not with *the thugs*. Those "thugs" are my family. I grew up with them. I do the same shit as those kids sometimes. It's just because they [administration] view us as a cut above the rest. You know, the Black kid making something of himself . . . That and they wouldn't want to mess up Friday night football.

During the afternoon, cultural capital linked to athletic participation enabled athletes of color to move freely between the hallway and the gym while their nonathletic peers were constrained to the hallway. Although not the focus of this study, these athletes of color articulated facing a high degree of pressure, particularly when they were the only athlete of color[3] on a team. Additionally, several students enumerated the ways in which they felt their presence on sports teams was generally unwanted,[4] particularly if their talents were surpassed by their white peers. Whether it was through peer pressure or bureaucratic means (as heard in "unwanted"), student athletes of color explained that feelings of exclusion and anxiety came along with the cultural capital of being an athlete.

I want to underscore how cultural capital can function to empower some athletes while constraining others. First, scholars like Eckert (1989) have explicated the cultural replication of identities that exists between "athletes" and "burnouts," showing how these mutually exclusive, codependent constructions are equally expressions of how cultural capital is often overlooked. Second, cultural capital often (un)intentionally not only creates sociocultural borders and boundaries for nonathletic students of color but, in the case of after-school spaces between the gym and the hall, it cements physical boundaries as well. While scholarly literature has focused on the material consequences and affective tensions of borders and boundaries (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987; Harvey, 1973; Menon, 1998), it is also important to consider how in-group differences subdivide the subaltern (Spivak, 1988), resulting in physical borders and additional sociocultural boundaries for these groups.

These boundaries were socially constructed by students of color who interacted in Little Africa, as the administration did not actively enforce a restriction on who could enter the gym after school. A social awareness of these lines was enacted in ways that were as material as the door that divided the two places. Finally, while the administration and cameras left Little Africa under constant surveillance, the gym afforded a degree of privacy to athletes of color. For example, when administrators cleared the hallway for events like staff meetings, they often turned first toward students in Little Africa, loudly asking them to leave first, before turning in the opposite direction to clear the portion of the hall with predominantly white students, even when this side was physically closer to them. Although administrators may have been unconsciously clearing the hall in this way, their actions consistently interrupted students of color's socializing before their white peers. The gym offered a quick escape from this kind of interruption because, as participants explained, when they heard administrators yell loudly for students to leave, athletes could use their available capital to duck into the gym for a moment, returning to the hall a few minutes later when the coast was clear.

Cultural capital is always at work, especially in places like school. Less discussed is how capital is also gained through shaming others. Elsewhere, I have called this use of shame to gain social mobility "capitals of shame" (Wozolek, 2018). At Milford, athletic cultural capital offers some insight into how both were at work simultaneously: Students were able to use their athletic abilities to engender a degree of physical and social wiggle room while also using shame as a tool against students who did not participate in athletics to garner more social mobility. The next section shows how shame traveled with intentional affect in, across, and between groups in ways that formed and informed individual and group agency.

Aggression, Urbanness, and Signifyin(g)

Young men of color further divided the Little Africa group according to where they live in the greater community. The city itself is fairly segregated, with most

families of color living in two areas: Hawks Corner, an apartment complex with Section 8 housing, and Smithville Street, an area consisting of mainly bungalow-style homes. These two places were located just one block away from each other. For the most part, students who resided in the apartments were raised in the community, whereas students who lived in the houses had generally moved in from larger, neighboring urban centers. Here, class differences between suburban and urban students tended to be an inversion of typical sociocultural ideas. By this I mean that students who had always lived in the suburbs often came from families with less economic capital than students who had moved from city spaces. Students who had relocated from nearby cities often had funds and accompanying socioeconomic privilege to relocate to a suburb where housing was far more expensive than some neighboring suburbs. Although the economic context of participants' families was not explicitly explored in this study, students who had spent most of their childhood in urban contexts before moving to the suburbs prior to or during high school largely shared the privilege of being economically mobile in ways that students of suburban families did not.

This division between suburban and urban male students of color often raised questions of identity as it related to both social class and perceptions of masculinity. Despite any fervor with which young men of color approached their hostilities, their disagreements were often tabled during and immediately after school hours. For example, throughout the school year, only one fight between students of color broke out in Little Africa. In this case, a sexual relationship between a student from Hawks Corner and a young woman of color who lived on Smithville had resulted in pregnancy. Her cousin, who attended night school at Milford, came in early one day to settle the score. Students were aware of the impending fight and readily recorded it with their cell phones but did not step in to assist either party. While threats of further acts of violence circulated, they rarely transpired—this fight was in many ways the exception that underscored Little Africa as a safe space for (male) students of color.

Although tensions between Hawks Corner and Smithville predominantly existed in verbal confrontation, physical challenges for power did exist. Along with other participants, Amani, a ninth-grade Black-identifying female student, explained that because broader school culture essentialized students of color as "just another Black kid," Little Africa became a safe space against a racialized institution and systemic violence between students of color and white students and staff. Little Africa was therefore also identified as a safe space against in-group violence because it existed as a place where students' ways of being could comfortably cut across sociocultural ideas or ideals on race.

An example of this reluctance to come to blows occurred one afternoon well after the closing bell. As the group in Little Africa dwindled, I returned to my classroom to prepare for the next day. At approximately 3:30pm, I made my way down the stairwell closest to the faculty parking lot on the green side of the

building. I found about ten boys from Hawks Corner crammed in the space between the outer and inner doors to exit the building. Every few minutes a boy would shout out, "Fine! I'm no pussy! I'm just going to leave!" He would take a step out of the first door and then quickly return to the safety of the vestibule. Their movements, like a group of penguins, seemed to offer a kind of protection in numbers, jostling each other until one fell out of the group to test the safety of the waters.

I pulled Jahmir, a generally talkative freshman, aside and inquired about the situation. He pointed to the far side of the parking lot. Barely off of school property, in the direction that students who lived in Hawks Corner would walk to get home, waited about five boys from Smithville. He explained that, as a joke, one boy from Hawks Corner had taken the tennis shoes of a boy from Smithville after gym class but that the "Smithville gang" was waiting to settle the score. Concerned that things could escalate quickly, I found one administrator left in the building and reported the incident. I was told that if it "was not on school property, it was not something in the school's control." From my perspective, the administrator's decision to be in-active during a moment that could have potentially threatened the safety of youth further reinscribed a racialized administrative positionality, but his body language clearly dismissed my concerns and he went back to his work without another word. When I returned to the exit, the boys had left the building.

The next morning, Jahmir informed me that no fight had occurred. He explained that both sides decided to "go home and rap about it." Following historical traditions of using hip hop to diffuse potentially physically violent situations (Dimitriadis, 2009; Emdin & Adjapong, 2018; Ibrahim, 2014; Land & Stovall, 2009; Rose, 1991), students of color in this context were writing rap songs and posting them on YouTube to serve as an intermediary.

Sound File: Mobbin'[5]

While the intent of their songwriting was to express disagreement in a non-physically aggressive manner, the result of the music was twofold. First, the boys' songs functioned in ways not dissimilar to signifyin(g) (Caponi, 1999; Gates, 1988; Jones, 1991) and other artistic expressions from people of African descent (Ibrahim, 2014). In this case, unlike aspects of hip hop that can escalate tension and violence (Ibrahim, 2014; Land & Stovall, 2009; Rose, 1991), the boys' songs acted as a proxy for potential face-to-face altercations. It also served as a kind of release valve for in-group tensions between Black male students in Little Africa. This allowed those who would otherwise have physically demonstrated their aggravations to coexist in relatively peaceful ways during and after school.

The consistent threats of violence among male students of color were more broadly framed by questions of identity. For example, all boys, regardless of where they were raised, seemed to follow norms and values that were set by

their family, school, and community, as well as broader media-induced ideas and ideals of blackness (Dancy et al., 2018; Dimitriadis, 2009; Ibrahim, 2014; Noguera, 2003). However, the young men both vocalized and physically demonstrated the inherent tension between those students whose identities and experiences aligned with urban contexts and those whose identities were a performance of the urban.

Sound File: Not Weak[6]

Male students of color in this case were not just (re)acting in performative ways or reiterating the sociocultural norms through which male blackness has been constituted (Butler, 1993; Inda, 2000; Tatum, 2003); they were interacting within their daily presentations of self (Goffman, 1959). As heard in the "Not Weak" sound file, the boys were not only performing iterations of blackness but also making arguments about what defines blackness. In this case, it was a question of strength attributed to race and masculinity. While discussions of performativity and performance are often centered on identity as it relates to power or on the discursive versus the material (Butler, 1993; Emdin & Adjapong, 2018), I draw on Goffman's (1959) *Presentations of Self in Everyday Life* in the next section to describe the agency that students had in deciding which version of themselves to present, as well as the multiplicity of angles, contexts, and audiences involved in these presentations.

Acting White/Being Black

Sound File: Adapting[7]
Sound File: Expectations of Blackness[8]

Explicit and implicit messages in the school dictated "acceptable" behaviors and patterns of speech that students of color were pressured to follow. As John, a Black student who was raised in the suburbs, explained, "They (white students and staff) are always out to get you, no matter what you do. Might as well be what they expect. Act the way they want. At least that way you can fit in with the other Black kids."

Despite the pressure to either, as participants across genders described, "act white" in order to adapt to a predominantly white institution or "act Black" to conform to in-group ideals (Carbado, 2013; Emdin, 2016; Tatum, 2003), students of color were aware of how and when they decided to enact a particular performance of self.

It is crucial to pause and remember that identities are inherently complex. One's ways of being, knowing, and doing exist in a gordian knot of intra-actions between bodies, both human and nonhuman, that stretch across sociopolitical and cultural histories. It is equally important to remember that the students

at Milford who participated in this study were all teenagers. During adolescence, youth are particularly prone to explorations of identity that can be difficult, confusing, and overwhelming. As is often true for marginalized student populations (see Quinn & Meiners, 2009; Tatum, 2003; Valente, 2011; Varenne & McDermott, 1998), what can be a challenging time for all teenagers becomes even more tenuous for historically marginalized groups like students of color. These students often become further separated through oppressive sociocultural ideals that pile on top of more common identity questions.

This section thinks critically about the intersections of teenage becoming and being as they are simultaneously constrained and enabled by local and less-local sociocultural norms and values. Therefore, it is significant to note the problematic nature of associating how one is or becomes in the world with monolithic perceptions of race, genders, sexual orientations, class, ability, and the like. For example, notions of "acting white," especially as it has been tied to academic achievement and social stigma in the United States, has served as a self-fulfilling prophecy for students while reinscribing pejorative sociocultural understandings around blackness.

The purpose of this discussion is not to reinscribe these limited and, frankly, racist understandings. Aligned with scholars like Crystal Laura (2014), Bettina Love (2019), and Chris Emdin (2021), I am arguing that what students articulated as "acting white" or "acting Black" was less about acting a certain way as it was about finding wiggle room in a context that did not permit students to engage in school authentically, effectively choking off students' ability to fully be themselves during school. This is aligned with scholars across African American intellectual traditions who explicated conforming to whiteness as a survival mechanism. This is also similar to dialogues in queer theory that describe queer youth negotiating cishetero norms and values that proliferate across systems of schooling, often regardless of race, class, and context (Halberstam, 2020; Mayo, 2018). Students articulated both tension and interplay between "acting white," "acting Black," and, for some youth in this study, "acting straight," as one way youth survived the curricular assemblages of violence maintained at Milford and the broader community which demand a particular kind of conformity.

While students used "acting white" as a way to garner cultural capital, and resist capitals of shame around what local actors at Milford identified as "acting Black," the performance of whiteness was far from passive. Students were clear that the ability to "act white" was a tool that could, and should, be used to move across sociopolitical contexts. While constraining, the ability to "act white" could be understood as a form of resistance to the very agentic contingencies that demanded cishetero whiteness from students, faculty, and administration.

This is akin to Goffman's (1959) work that uses the image of a theater to discuss how local actors can perform versions of themselves alongside sociocultural expectations of ontoepistemologies. Goffman focused on the inherent agency one has within the staged and spontaneous interactions that are central to the ways

one presents themselves. Students were clear that, although the performance of whiteness and blackness increased their access to certain spaces, and wiggle room in others, they had the ability to choose how and when to act with/in versions of blackness and whiteness. Similar to Barad's (2007) discussion of agency emerging from events, students of color were clear that the ability to perform blackness or whiteness—and the capacity to have their actions accepted by peers and faculty—was central to power dynamics at Milford.

Young men of color were especially explicit that the performance of "acting Black" was often beneficial at Milford, regardless of athletic ability or connections to city spaces. When approached by white peers or teachers who seemed intimidated by their race and/or gender, the boys commented that their performance of blackness earned the group more physical space within Little Africa. For example, in the beginning of the year there were several occasions where white freshman boys would approach the group and ask racialized, purposefully provocative questions like "How did I wind up in the Black hole of the school?" or "When did our school get so ghetto?" Young men of color would often respond by partially surrounding the questioner to obscure the situation from administrators while intimidating the student. Then, with a sense of self that seemed particularly rehearsed, one boy (generally a junior or senior), would step forward and say something like "You wanna fuck wit a nigga? You gotta mess wit all the niggas or, if you want, you can jus' pick me . . ." The fear of "an angry Black man" as Brad, a white student explained, was enough to get most students to back down. By the end of the first academic quarter, few white students made racist remarks and the group as a whole received a wide berth in the hall as students filed out of the building.

Jayden, a Black freshman watching this kind of exchange early in the year, argued that these actions were not without consequence. In an interview he articulated feeling a tension as the events unfolded. He explained that, in his opinion, "playing into this image of an angry Black man just lets people keep thinking the same stereotype . . . but it also makes people leave [the group] alone. So, [Black students] have to ask themselves, 'Would we rather be seen as angry or have racists leave us alone so we can be whoever we want?' It sucks that those are the choices, but I don't know what else to do."

Despite racial in-group differences, male students of color across identities tended toward performing African American stereotypes. For example, one afternoon Alejandro, a biracial (white-Latino) student, was upset. He had gotten in trouble with a teacher who overheard him say to a biracial girl that he was a "badass nigga." In a follow-up interview, I sought clarification and asked him, for the second time, how he identified. He again stated, "half white, half Mexican." I said, "Can you tell me a bit more about how you feel the N-word describes your identity?" He said with confidence, "Well I guess I'm one, right? Aren't we all in Little Africa? That's all they see us as anyway." This perspective was confirmed by several white students. For example, Kaylee, a white junior stated that if a student,

regardless of their identity, decided to hang out in Little Africa, they "shouldn't be surprised if they are labeled as n-words. Act like one, hang out with them, you are one. Birds of a feather, right?"

Although what it meant to "be Black" or "be white" is diverse in terms of geographic location, social class, age, personal background, and cultural memory, the ways that students classified blackness and whiteness in terms of actions were remarkably consistent and tied to students who, as Alejandro described, spent time in Little Africa. In a group interview, several male and female students of color described blackness as being aligned with "city folks," "hip-hop music," and "being tough." A focus group of all white participants yielded similar answers. Whiteness was generally characterized by "raising hands in class," "being delicate," "dressing uptight," and "being up in everyone's business." A broader contemporary image of the kind of whiteness described by participants is the characterization of white women as "Karen" and "Becky," or the less-used description of white men as "Ken." Rather than always interrupt these essentializations, as a researcher I attempted to watch how they were enacted in school. Toward the end of the study, I held several focus groups with participants where we unpacked questions of racism, sexism, queer bias, and essentialization.

Students across races and genders noted that "acting Black" carved out a physical place and emotional space for young men of color during hectic moments in the school day. Conversations within the group when students of color were left "alone so [they] can be whoever [they] want," to return to Jayden's quote above, was often used to unpack the inequities that they faced in everyday schooling. As can be heard in the next three sound files, their afternoon conversations ranged from dating to social conditions from the classroom to the corridor.

Sound File: Dating White Girls[9]
Sound File: Snapback[10]
Sound File: Halloween[11]

While these conversations demonstrate the multiple ways that male students of color are marginalized in their daily interactions at school, the desire to share this information with other male students of color after school is significant. Although in-group difference was substantial enough to warrant occasional physical and verbal confrontations, the need to unpack daily oppressions often outweighed differences among the young men.

Perhaps most significantly, students of color across gender identities used their time at the end of the day to offer ontological critiques of each other. These critiques included how to "be Black" without becoming "too white," ways to avoid trouble in school, and how to ascribe to gender norms within whiteness while still being culturally accepted in and between groups in Little Africa. Information was often passed from elder to younger students. Students who were more established in the school (i.e., third- and fourth-year students) tended to give out

information to younger students about how to act, where to be, or how to avoid trouble. This advice was not dependent on social class. Yet when it came to issues of physical altercations, students who were raised in city spaces were often positioned by the group to field questions about self-defense.

These dynamics are not dissimilar to scholarship on non-Western schooling that attends to oral traditions within groups, dissemination of knowledge, and how identity is passed through cultural and historical memories (Au, 1980; Barnhardt, 2005; Watkins, 2010). This is not to say that African Americans share cultural markers of, for example, Yoruba Nigerians. Rather, I want to draw attention to the kinds of oral tradition that are central to many African cultures and have also been significant to enslaved people in the United States, Black religious communities, and hip-hop culture (Akinyemi & Falola, 2020; Emdin, 2016; Remes, 1991). I conceptualize the oral histories of participants as a formal curriculum because they were explicit and taught with intention and attention. Although many teachers and administrators might not understand this curriculum as having the same weight as what is taught in the classroom, I argue that we should take such oral traditions just as seriously—to listen as if Black lives mattered as much as the state-regulated curriculum. The formal curriculum of the corridor was a tool for passing knowledge about safety, identity, and schooling across generations.

Just Chillin' or Stealing?

Although Little Africa provided inroads to a sense of community for boys of color, my interviews with various administrators rendered a very different perspective about the group. As heard earlier in the sound file "Administration,"[12] the majority of administrators shared the opinion that students spent time in Little Africa not only for a sense of community but as an escape from difficult contexts at home. One administrator explained that, besides offering a distraction from going home, time in Little Africa created the opportunity for students of color to steal valuables from the unlocked lockers of athletes. When I asked about the frequency of such thefts, the administrator recalled only one specific incident, but insisted that students of color who were not in athletics or school-sanctioned activities specifically used the time after school as an opportunity to commit such crimes.

In a conversation with another administrator, I asked if he was concerned with racism in the building. He explained that the school did not have an issue with racism but noted that if it did, it was "reverse racism," because while "words like the N-word [were] not used in the building, [he had] heard the word cracker used recently." This claim of reverse racism proactively defended white students' actions against such offenses by students of color. When I asked if he felt that students of color used their time after school to develop a sense of community, he again explained that white students "almost never use racial epithets," implying

that using the time after school to unpack racist events was unnecessary. Finally, a third administrator expressed concern with students of color spending time in the building after school, hoping that "a policy to clear the building can be put in place before something terrible happens."

It is important to note that all the administrators interviewed for this study seemed to view the private lives of students of color with a degree of pity, and some even acknowledged the racist epistemologies of the white student body. Administrators often used what they labeled as empathy for "African American and Hispanic students' difficult pasts and current situations," as one administrator put it, to position themselves as saviors who could potentially shield students from certain "situations" (e.g., working or living in urban settings, diverse social contexts, or issues with parental upbringing). In doing so, however, they carried out racialized structural inequities with seemingly limited awareness of the consequences for students of color. The ignorance of administrators that reinscribed such inequities (like limited awareness of derogatory terms in the school, normalized associations of students of color with crime, or increased punitive measures for students of color) translated into essentialized perceptions of students of color by white students and staff. Over time, many students of color were clear that these perceptions of white peers and faculty became self-fulfilling prophecies of failure.

If "whiteness" is a desirable trait defined through actions and ways of being, it is something to possess. Critical race scholars have established whiteness as a form of property. Similar to Bourdieu's (1993) discussion on cultural capital and Mills' (1998) work on social ontology, *Whiteness as Property* (Harris, 1993) posits the capital of being white as central not only to sociocultural values but also to historically legalized racism (Haynes Writer, 2008; Leonardo, 2002; Orozco, 2011). Scholars in the field of education have argued that whiteness as property permeates the structure of schooling through policies and practices like tracking, high-stakes testing, and curricular standardization (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Haynes Writer, 2008; Ladson Billings, 2009). As heard in the sound files "Adapting"[13] and "Expectations of Blackness,"[14] students of color described acting white in terms of things like changing vernacular or, as Rynnelle (an eleventh-grade Black female student) stated, "trying overly hard to be something that you're not."

As discussed in the next chapter about girls' experience at Milford, this can be extended to white behaviors specific to both femininity and masculinity. While whiteness as property is often socioculturally and legally engendered and enforced, it is important to add to narratives that consider the policies and procedures that maintain white cultural capital through students' everyday experiences in the corridors of schools. In other words, I argue that the everyday normalization of whiteness that allowed administrators to simultaneously be openly racist while mobilizing pity through a white savior complex worked to further enact racist policies and procedures. Underlying these policies and procedures is

a not-so-hidden curriculum where students of color are not only positioned as "Other" but as a threat that needs to be controlled and suppressed.

Taken as a whole, the everyday experiences of boys of color within Milford High School exist at the intersections of identity, sociocultural norms, and ways of being and knowing. Their performances of self were encouraged, if not expected, by white students and staff through the hidden curriculum. When boys of color forgot their positionalities or overplayed their roles in the underlife, they often found themselves in trouble with the administration and staff. A salient example is heard in one of the two sound files that closes this chapter, "Because I Hugged Her," from John. As John explains, he was in Little Africa after school with two white, female students. As girls of color later explained, these girls were known for dating Black boys in the school. When John asked one girl for food and she denied his request, he stole several of her chips. When she expressed anger at his actions, he asked for forgiveness and hugged her. His unwanted physical advances resulted in a rape accusation, his expulsion, and a trial in juvenile court. Administrators had finished watching the hall for the afternoon, and the footage from all the cameras in the hall was initially missing (only to be found when the case went to court) to confirm John's innocence, something he discusses with frustration in the file. While the boys in Little Africa were under constant surveillance by cameras, administration, or staff, that supervision failed when convenient, leaving them to negotiate spaces and places as a group or alone.

While it is never acceptable for people, regardless of race, gender identity, or any other factor, to experience unwanted sexual advances, I share John's perspective to attend to the following: John's confusion when these accusations came from a girl he labeled as a "safe white girl," who he didn't think would be upset when he, as a young Black man, offered a hug; how the administration reacted to a Black student's flirtation with a white student; and how parents of color reacted to this event. Situations like these were not uncommon as boys of color negotiated their social capital and ultimately reached their ontological ceilings, or, as I have framed it elsewhere, their agentic contingencies, meaning the circumstances that limit a person's ability to enact agency within and as a result of intra-actions (Wozolek, 2021). After the incident, both girls and boys of color reported family discussions focused on the event. For young men of color, these discussions often concentrated on the idea that John should have listened to the community's collective warnings about staying away from young white women. Girls of color reported having serious discussions about the relative value of being a girl of color. As Shay explained, "My dad just told me to remember this moment. That if this is how boys are treated for messin' with a white girl, they don't give a damn 'bout what happens to me as a Black girl if a white boy messes with me."

Given Emma's narrative in the next chapter where she describes being sexually assaulted, I could not argue Shay's point. Similarly, as the next chapter explores, girls of color faced similar complications of the everyday. But, as the girls explain in the sound file "Because I'm Black," the friction they caused to

sociocultural norms and values was based not only on the color of their skin but also their gender.

> Sound File: Because I Hugged Her[15]
> Sound File: Because I'm Black[16]

Notes

1 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_White-Students.mp3
2 Although the student featured in Figure 3.1 asked me to take her photo and consented to have this photo featured in any publications that resulted from this study, given the student's age and potential immaturity, I have obscured the image slightly to further deidentify the participant to protect her anonymity.
3 To hear this file, to go: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Only-athlete-of-color.mp3
4 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/unwanted.mp3
5 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/mobbin.mp3
6 To hear this file, to go: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/not-weak.mp3
7 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/adapting.mp3
8 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/expectations-of-blackness.mp3
9 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Dating-White-Girls.mp3
10 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/snapback.mp3
11 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Halloween.mp3
12 To revisit this file, to go: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_Admin.mp3
13 To revisit this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/adapting.mp3
14 To revisit this file, to go: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/expectations-of-blackness.mp3
15 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Hug.mp3
16 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Because-Im-black.mp3

4

"AND THAT'S MY STRUGGLE BUS"

Sound File: Singing[1]

The pressures that young women of color faced were different than from those of young men of color. There were, however, parallel race-based themes that were consistent for both groups throughout the study. For example, male Black and brown students felt disproportionately targeted for punishments like detentions and suspensions, consistent with discussions of the school-to-prison pipeline (Laura, 2014; Meiners, 2016). Young Black and brown women, on the other hand, felt more targeted for infractions like breaking the dress code (Morris, 2016) or being vocally disruptive or "loud" (Fordham, 1993; Jones, 2009). Students of color across gender identities reported encounters with racist bullying, surveillance by administrators or staff, and social exclusion through clubs or athletics. While boys of color expressed their resentment toward their treatment from the school community openly, girls of color were equally disturbed but less likely to report these incidents either to me or to the administration. For much of this study, during their time in Little Africa, girls generally kept their distance from me and were reluctant to report in-group interactions.

Because girls of color were less likely to openly share information, this chapter both supports and complicates the previous one centered on male students of color in Little Africa. My intention is neither to disregard the lived experiences of young women of color at Milford, nor is it to define either group by the other; I am simply limited by what these young women chose to share. Although I formed strong relationships with female participants, their interviews and maps focused more on experiences during the school day than on those that occurred before or after school hours in Little Africa. For example, while the written and audio maps created by students all produced a narrative cartography of the school,

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245-5

girls' maps generally attended to social spaces and interactions while boys' maps focused on physical places (see Figure 4.1). Without falsely splitting spaces and places, this points to the imbricated and yet distinct ways that girls and boys thought of and mapped the spaces and places they occupied during school.

While boys of color used Little Africa as a place to meet prior to wandering the hall during the school day, girls often used the restrooms near Little Africa to hide out and avoid detection. I encountered one salient example one day as I was walking through the building during my lunch, observing school culture during class periods. Upon passing the girl's restroom by Little Africa, I heard a rich soprano voice resounding within the tiled walls, singing "Royals"[2] by Lorde. A moment later, I heard a conversation interrupt the voice:

Caerra:	(singing) . . . And I'm not proud of my address, in a torn-up town, no postcard envy . . .
Stephanie:	Damn, what the fuck are you doing? You're going to get us busted!
Rynnelle:	So? At least she got it. It's nice. Plus, she's makin' the place better.
Caerra:	Uhh, yeah, bitch. I make this place pretty. Ain't nothin' else pretty around us. Besides, we jus' cuttin' lunch. Who da fuuuuck cares? Anyway, don't you know . . . (resumes singing) We'll never be royals!
Rynnelle:	(laughing)
Stephanie:	Fuck this, I'm leaving.

This example makes their choice of safe place expressly visible. Several girls articulated using these restrooms not only as an extension of Little Africa but also as a place to "hide away but still be around." While the girls in this example may have been using the space to cut class (or lunch), the restroom was also a "safe space" for some girls of color in the group. Notably, while all students of color explicated that Little Africa existed in the cafeteria in the morning and in the hallway at other times of day, none discussed these restrooms in terms of "Little Africa." This means that, in many ways, the restroom provided a "safe space" for girls of color away from not only the broader school but also the previously established borders of Little Africa. As I argue later in the chapter, girls of color had to create "safe spaces" in which their bodies were completely removed from these main borders in order to have an unrestrained space for their ways of being.

For example, in one interview, Emma, a quiet biracial student who often kept to herself, revealed that she had been sexually assaulted by her white boyfriend during the first quarter of the academic year.[3] Her parents and the school were aware of the crime, and she was receiving counseling through a rape crisis center. However, like many sexual assault survivors, she was reluctant to make a formal report, afraid of what would happen if she pressed charges. Emma still had to endure several classes a day with her assailant, including lunch and study hall. Adding further insult to literal bodily harm, according to Emma, the boy had made several remarks during lunch about the assault. Feeling fearful and unsafe,

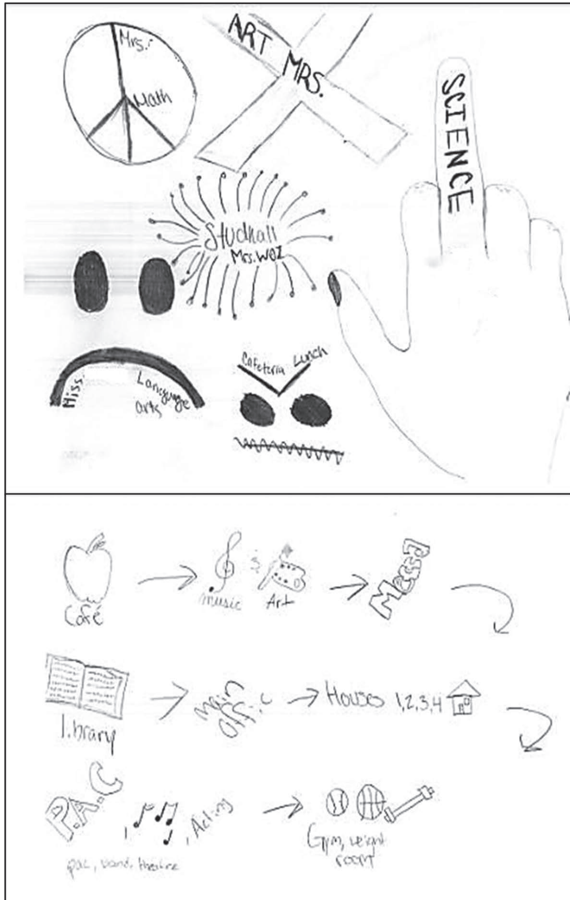


FIGURE 4.1. Maps drawn by girls of color to depict important spaces and places in the school

she found herself eating meals in the restroom near Little Africa, because, as she explained, the restroom was the only place she could "feel safe in the school." She would later become an official aide in my classroom to avoid eating in such an unsanitary context. The decision to become a classroom aide was at her request, presumably because of the relationships I had built in my roles as a teacher and a researcher. It is of no small significance that girls of color selected restrooms as their safe space in the underlife of their school (see Goffman, 1961).

Black and brown girls' decision to use this restroom as a safe space, while unsanitary, is practically wise for several reasons. First, it is an area that offers privacy, beyond the observation of school cameras. Offices, classrooms, and restrooms are the only areas of the building that were afforded this privacy. Second, as there is only one female administrator—who students explained was often attending

meetings out of or on the "white" side of the building—the restrooms near Little Africa were relatively impervious to administrator interruption. Additionally, its location in the main hall on the outside wall of the academic wing lowered the possibility that female staff members, who usually stayed in academic wings of the building, would be questioning their presence. (Classrooms existed in their own annexed square, often closed off through a set of doors that led to the main hallway.)

Finally, this restroom held the socially advantageous position as the nearest restroom to Little Africa, creating a close proximity to the place where the young men of color met up during class periods before wandering the building. While girls of color did not discuss the use of the restroom in their visual or auditory maps, every male student of color who created a visual map noted the girls' restroom as an important location in the school (see Figure 2.3). Overall, while students used Little Africa and surrounding public locations throughout the day as cover to avoid student responsibilities (class) or personal crises, girls tended to find locations like restrooms as a stable base to evade detection. As a result, when girls were in the hall, either to wander or for activities like mapping the building, they were rarely stopped.

"Acceptable" Behaviors

Within Little Africa, boys of color generally took up far more acoustic and physical space than the girls. As Tara explained,

> (White) people expect that boys act like niggas. Clownin' around, making fools outta themselves. Girls? Well it's different for us. We gotta be like white girls. If we're loud, we're ignorant or not living up to our potential. Boys only have one way to be. We have the way we are and then the way we're expected to be, ya know? But it doesn't really matter 'cause at the end, you'll never actually *be white*. And who we are will *never be* accepted. It's just impossible.

Krista, a studious African American sophomore, echoed Tara's explanation when asked, "Do you feel white teachers and peers expect you to behave a certain way?" Briefly, yet emphatically for Krista's quiet nature, she explained the expectations of "best behavior"[4] in Milford for young women of color.

The girls' enumeration of a sociocultural set of "acceptable behaviors" for female students of color on one hand emphasizes the double bind of having one's ontology considered socially unacceptable while simultaneously being expected to work toward unattainable ways of being. Similar to the conversation in Chapter 3 on "acting white," this does not mean that young women of color have a narrow set of ontologies. Rather, this is an attention to the narrow set of ontologies demanded by local and less-local cultures. These gender norms often

meant girls were expected to adhere to what participants discussed as "white" femininities in order to be considered acting "properly" within the school context. Though all girls in the school faced the challenge of gendered expectations, girls of color were particularly marginalized by the double bind of both race and gender. On the other hand, this double bind underscores the narrow, predefined understandings of boys' ontologies. In terms of space, these understandings of acceptable behaviors often translated to girls of color speaking quietly while performing their "best behavior" as they stood in tightly packed circles after school. Inversely, as discussed above with respect to the image of boisterous, potentially violent boys of color, white students often gave the boys more physical room to "just be" in Little Africa while encroaching on young women of color, many times with racist as well as sexist comments and attention.

Just Be-ing: Womanish ways in Little Africa

Apart from brief moments where girls of color, often in groups of two, would break apart from their circle to talk or flirt with boys of color, the girls' movements were fairly confined. For example, female athletes of color often used the restroom near Little Africa to change for sports. Unlike their athletic male counterparts, they did not disappear into the locker room and resurface dressed in athletic wear to continue socializing. Instead, the girls often waited longer to change, getting ready only moments before the practice began and moving quickly to the court or field. When asked to describe themselves, girls of color identified less strongly with their athletic abilities, describing their participation in athletics less openly or enthusiastically than male athletes of color. The following interview with Caitlyn is but one example of how female athletes of color often minimized their participation in athletics:

BW: To help me get a better understanding of what makes you, well, you, tell me how you would describe yourself?

Caitlyn: Umm . . . I dunno. I'm a girl. And I'm Black. And a student . . . That's me, I guess.

BW: Okay . . . What are you good at? What do you like to do? What don't you like to do?

Caitlyn: Umm . . . I have a boyfriend this year! And, ummm, I'm ok at school. Plus, I'm a good friend cuz I don't snitch, *ever*. And I play tennis but I'm not on varsity.

Caitlyn decided to begin her list with things that made her feel good. Without interrupting this young woman of color's acknowledgment of when she feels positively about herself, or the things that are central to these feelings, I focus here on how she framed her participation in sports. As previously heard in the sound file "Unwanted,"[5] female athletes often experienced multiple sources of pressure to drop their participation in athletics. Some identified that coaches did not take

them seriously, regardless of their athletic ability. Similar to many professional athletes like Serena Williams or Simone Biles, Black female athletes at Milford articulated a double standard, explaining that they were at once considered "too masculine" while also being asked by their white peers if they were athletically advantaged[6] because of their race.

For girls of color, the double bind at the intersection of race and gender pushed at their identities while strengthening the bonds between them. As Raquel, a twelfth-grade multiracial student, poignantly explained:

> The boys got their thing to belong to—Hawks or Smithville. We don't. We can ride with one group but we're never gonna be, like, *with* the group. They can do a sport or not. I can be on the court but can't have too many muscles. I can be hot. You *know* I can wear heels and a skirt and look goo-*ood*! But I'll always get called down to the office while some skinny-assed white girl shows off more than me. We [girls of color] have less we can be so we got to be together.

This is not to say that young women of color somehow avoided in-group disputes. Their arguments were largely held through social media. Much like their decision to use the restrooms to skip class rather than wandering the halls, their disagreements were privately situated within larger public contexts. During the study, disagreements between girls did not result in physical violence. Similarly, students in the study could only recall one fight in recent history between girls of color. In-group stories about this fight did not focus on the precipitating factors that led to the conflict; their dialogue was fixated primarily on reactions[7] from their white peers. When heated social media exchanges erupted into verbal disputes among the group, the subject of the argument was often boys and dating. These disputes seemed prevalent among all girls and played into female stereotypes in general. As Caitlyn said, "Sometimes I don't wanna fight with my girls. But, isn't that just what girls do?"

Part of the tension surrounding dating was that young women of color frequently communicated feelings of anxiety about limited dating prospects, as they felt rejected by both white male peers and male students of color. As heard in sound file "Dating White Girls,"[8] young men of color of color also struggled with interracial dating but rarely felt rejected by girls of color. When boys of color dated white girls, it was often discussed by their peers and by parents in the community as the white girl going through a "wild phase" or "having jungle fever." When young women of color dated white boys, students' or parents' discussions (as relayed by students) focused on how the boy could not "get a nice white girl" or ended up with "Black trash."

These reactions to interracial relationships in the school were significant to the students of color for several reasons. First, they were highly gendered. One reaction framed Black men as "exotic" while another shamed the Black women for their bodies. Second, they were a form of racialized othering that affectively

impacted all students of color, regardless of their gender. While boys of color were free to pursue girls of color, the girls often felt their advances were chided.

Sound File: Slave Feet[9]

This sound file resonates with several young women's experiences as they struggled to find romantic companionship with male peers, regardless of race. In particular, "slave feet" points to questions of femininity as well as the othering of gender and race within a racial group. Some girls called their experiences in dating and the lack of acceptance of their ways of being and their bodies a "struggle bus." When pressed as to why they used the word "bus," the girls explained they needed a large vehicle to house their "struggles"—that it was their lot in life to just "drive the bus and deal with the struggles."

In terms of dating, young women of color were subjected to white norms and values not only through framings of appropriate behavior but also in terms of white beauty ideals. As Shay explained, "My ass ain't skinny enough for a white boy and no Black boy wants a mocha queen." Further, young women of color often articulated that unless their hair was relaxed, young men of color and white students would make comments about them being "ratchet," or otherwise denoting that they were economically disenfranchised.

As Shay explained, in contrast with the fact that many boys of color could wear their hair in "fros or rows" without a problem (see Figure 4.2), girls at Milford had one style that was considered attractive: relaxed hair. Boys of color in this case strongly contributed to marginalization of girls of color and the double bind of being "of color" and "female." This is not unlike Du Bois' (1903) framing of double consciousness for people of color that is compounded by gender, as Anna Julia Cooper, Mary McLeod Bethune, Gloria Anzaldúa, Sylvia Wynter, Kimberle Crenshaw, and other feminists of color have noted. Returning to my framing in the introduction, it also shows how echo chambers of oppression disproportionately impact people and groups who hold multiple marginalized identities. The feelings of oppression that girls faced came not only from their white peers or staff but also from male students of color within their community. Female participants of color also discussed the ways that they played into these ideas and ideals about femininity, not only to garner further attention from male students of color and white boys but also to pass among the white population.

The denigration of Black female bodies extended beyond romance and sexuality and into the school dress code. For example, one spring afternoon I was walking through the main hall after a staff meeting. The track team had unrolled a mat for indoor hurdles practice. As they stretched, four girls of color were using a section of the mat as a runway. One called out to me, "Hey! Woz! Check out this strut and you tell me if there is anything wrong with what I'm wearing!" She straightened herself up and, with her best model impression, strutted my way for a few steps, one hand on her hip, the other swinging lightly beside her. When

FIGURE 4.2 Matthew with afro, headphones, and pick

she was a few feet away she smiled, tossed her hair, and walked a few steps in the opposite direction. I casually asked, "Do you want to explain what all that was about?" She sighed angrily and told me that she had been given a detention for wearing leggings to school but that she was wearing boots so, according to many participants' interpretation of the school rule, she should be permitted to wear the leggings.

This was a loophole in the dress code that many girls, regardless of race, liked to manipulate. The rule was that all pants that are not of denim material must flare out at the leg. Girls often wore boots over leggings, challenging teachers who complained about their pants as, aside from asking someone to remove their boots, there was practical no way to know if the pants had a flare. Despite attempts to thwart dress code rules in the name of fashion, many girls, independent of race, complained about administrative and staff attempts to prohibit the style. Although she had boisterously pointed out that four other girls (all white) in the class were also wearing leggings and boots, she was still sent to the office. In the office she was told by an adult that the style was viewed as more sexual "on girls like [her] than others." In her indignation, she explained that the teacher who sent her to the office was probably just "jealous because she has no ass to show off." Other girls quickly broke in with statements like "So a white girl wears it and it's just fine. But a Black girl wears it and she's suddenly a hoe?" This kind of racialized understanding strongly contributed to a hidden curriculum of "exotic" Black and brown bodies. These curricular lessons only served to maintain the double bind of a racialized female consciousness that girls of color often iterated during maps and interviews.

Further, the girls of color often vocalized their discontent about being penalized for their appearance, as the only female administrator often wore form fitting

dresses and skirts that, if viewed through the same lens, would break student dress code policies. More than one student observed this administrator being called a "babe" by male administrators over the two-way radios, and the group often vented their frustration of not only the kind of role model she provided but also the more general acceptance of her appearance by her male colleagues.

The girls were responding to the multiple, negative ways that their bodies were exoticized. These girls could not be in school without being labeled as a sexualized, "exotic" Other. Their choices, right down to the pants that white female students could comfortably wear, were noted as difference, and regarded with a particular kind of sexual significance. The girls were positioned within affective tensions between their own self-images and cultural ideas of the "exotic other" that reside at the intersection of blackness and being female (Wilson, 2021), and they openly vocalized their struggle to just *be* in school. In this case, just as all students of color were subjected to a curriculum of racial profiling in the halls, a curriculum about bodies and being was enacted daily between the female students of color, staff, administration, and their white peers.

Sound File: Pajama Pants[10]

Independent of the fit of the clothes or the context (e.g., class versus Saturday detention), the bodies of young Black and brown women were often noticed and reprimanded for simply existing at the intersection of race and gender. While girls faced dress code violations much more frequently than boys of color, boys were not impervious to such visibilities. Though comparatively infrequent to the times girls were confronted, boys complained about teachers' objections to sagging pants. While sagging pants on boys of color and leggings on girls of color were objects of discontent among staff members, a few white boys wore T-shirts with racialized messages or confederate flags (see Figure 4.3). On more than one occasion, I asked boys wearing these shirts if they had been sent home for their attire and I was told they had not. In one case, as I passed a staff hall monitor, he was complimenting one of these students on his choice of attire.

To be clear, during this study I observed only four students who wore clothes with such messages. In addition, it is possible that these individuals were disciplined at later dates. While punishments that girls and boys of color faced might be chalked up to infractions that potentially show parts of the body in comparison to a loose-fitting T-shirt, they also reveal the hidden curriculum of acceptable ways of being. While arguments have been made that wearing the confederate flag is as much about identity as it is about freedom of speech (Carlson et al., 2005; Kaplan, 2007; Talbert & Patterson, 2020), particularly in the case of the girls of color, the message of legitimate racism against illegitimate blackness became clear. In this context, the question became, whose bodies and messages about being had cultural value?

Girls of color articulated their frustration of being othered through what they perceived to be the unequal enactment of school policy. They were confounded

FIGURE 4.3 T-shirt logos featured on clothes that white children wore during school

by their understanding that there seemed "no right way to be in [their] clothes while others [could] be how they want," as Tiana explained. This is not dissimilar to the boys, who vocalized being in trouble for "breathing the wrong way" while at school. However, while boys gained access to physical places and social spaces by giving in to stereotypes of blackness and masculinity, girls found places to "just be" by playing into sociocultural gender norms. Although the constraints of meeting an ideal of white femininity often frustrated the girls, it also enabled them to be far less visible than the boys of color. In other words, by playing into sociocultural expectations, the girls were able to become less noticed, although never invisible, and to participate in the underlife of the institution more easily.

Spaces of Possibility: Little Africa, the Underlife, and Queerness

While boys resisted marginalization in more active ways (e.g., violent threats, (re)claiming physical places daily, or wandering the building), the passive resistance exercised by the girls granted them similar access to the underlife of the institution. As Goffman (1961) argues, local actors gain access to the underlife of an

institution by first playing a role within respective sociocultural norms and values, then working within and around such understandings in order to access places and spaces that provide relief from the role's constraints. Just as Mills (1998) frames social ontologies as predetermined ways of being via sociocultural ideas and ideals, Goffman (1961) argues that local actors must attend to these preconceived notions of being to participate in the underlife of an institution.

Often, girls, regardless of race, would describe an expectation to be quiet compared to boys in the school. When Black and brown girls were expected to be quiet, their silence became a part of the "way girls are supposed to be" in school culture. Their participation within the underlife and actions that may be in friction with these ways of being become un/noticed, as they have already paid the piper of social ontology. Here, both boys and girls of color participated in various roles to have the space to participate in the underlife. For example, when Black and brown male students were admonished for their behavior and sent to the office during class, they often took most of the class period to wander or meet up with friends before arriving at their designated destination. Similarly, Black and brown female students who complied with gender stereotypes and, as Tara noted above, worked to be "on their best behavior," frequently asked for passes to leave class and then met up with friends in the restroom or another safe space.

In terms of resistance, resilience, and refusal to boundaries and borders, both boys and girls of color used their social ontology to create "spaces of possibility" (Helfenbein, 2010, p. 103)—or the underlife of the school. By this I mean that students of color used an acute understanding of their social ontology to gain access to places and social spaces. Although Mills discussed social ontology in static terms, here I understand it as fluid and possibly open to manipulation by student agency.

While students of color enacted their agency to "be" in school, they similarly used their available wiggle room to construct spaces for other marginalized populations. Specifically, a group of all white lesbian students spent time in Little Africa, interacting with both gender groups every day. As heard in the following clip from an interview with a white lesbian participant and two straight students of color, all three shared a strong consensus on how their different groups benefit from the lesbian population spending time in Little Africa after school.

Sound File: An Army[11]

In addition, the ubiquitous answer among students of color when interviewed without the presence of lesbian students was that, when comparing the two populations (straight students of color and generally white lesbians), they articulated that it was more "difficult to be gay than to be Black" in the school. These tensions existed in several ways at Milford. For example, participants felt that while the school administration tolerated a Genders and Sexualities Alliance (GSA), they would be less than supportive of the idea of a Black Student Union. However, in

social interactions, students across genders, races, and sexual orientations noted that queer students were most likely to face physical and emotional harm from other students. When pressed as to why gay male students were not welcomed in Little Africa, both boys and girls of color articulated that the presence of gay men would be insulting to the masculinity of straight male students of color. As most males of color defined their masculinity as a binary opposition to femininity, these students found gay males, particularly those who identified with feminine expressions, as a challenge to their ideals of being a man (Gilbert, 2014; Johnson, 2016; Pascoe, 2007).

Although Little Africa functioned as a safe space for cisgender, straight youth of color, the same comforts were not extended to gay males or transgender students, regardless of race, but particularly not to any young men of color who identified as gay, trans, or gender expansive. Additionally, any behavior that could have been considered "gay" was quickly rectified by the group. One example occurred when Jahmir received a "dick pic" from another student. Rather than deleting it, he brought the image to the group in Little Africa. A sudden uproar of comments like "Are you fucking fag? Why the fuck did you save that?" erupted from the group.

Deryl, a leader in the group who often used his tall, muscular frame to tower over his peers, was called over. He took one look at the photo, wrapped his arm around Jahmir's narrow shoulders, and whispered loudly,

> Bro . . . you better get that shit off your phone if it comes in. You want people thinkin' you're fag? No . . . you don't. Now I'm not gonna beat you to help you remember, this time. Hear me? You ain't no fag so don't have fag pics on your phone.

Jahmir quickly deleted the image and Deryl lifted the weight of his large arm off Jahmir's shoulders. The explicit message that being gay would not be tolerated near the group was understood among boys, white and Black. This situation highlights the ways that boys of color not only came to terms with their own sexual orientation, as many students attempt to do during adolescence, but were also pushed into cishetero understandings of sexuality at the intersection of cultural ideals and in-group messages. In terms of why lesbians were welcomed to the spaces and places of Little Africa, Keilonte stated, "Lesbians are just hot. Well, they're hot and no one else around here will have them. Gay boys? Hell no! I don't want them hitting on us."

The inclusion of lesbian students to the exclusion of gay young men is significant to the underlife of marginalized populations at the school. First, following Freire (1970), it shows how oppression gives way to other forms of oppression—the oppressed become the oppressor. At Milford, as with many schools across the United States, students of all racial identities were presented with a culturally monolithic understanding of ways of being and knowing that guides them toward

be-coming the oppressor. Students of color, in this case, use their available power to further oppress one population (queer males) while granting another (lesbians) space that the group may otherwise not be given in the school. To be clear, this is not to add to dialogues that assume a false dichotomy between race and queerness. Such racialization of homophobia often serves to further alienate people of color, queer people, and those who reside at the intersections of such identities (Connell, 2016; Johnson, 2016). Rather, I am reporting the divisions that students described that I also observed during my time at Milford. Some of this was perpetuated by Milford's hidden curriculum while some was the result of broader sociocultural norms. The history of normalized sexual orientation playing into ideas and ideals of masculinity, along with what appears to be cultural amnesia about the historical implications of men on the down low (Arscott et al., 2020; Boykin, 2005), engendered a habitus of distain among boys of color at Milford for their gay male peers, regardless of race or class.

In addition, following Bourdieu's (1993) description of fields, the boundaries between fields of sexual orientation are porous in this space. As identity and power are played out daily within these fields, sexual orientation often came into focus as students of color grappled with their own orientations and had everyday experiences with LGBTGNQIA2S+ students. As students of color interact with the queer population, one marginalized group uses their available cultural capital to create social norms and values for the space. In this case the imposed values created a fragmentation of the larger LGBTGNQIA2S+ group, positioning lesbians with the additional capital of physical and emotional protection from their straight white peers. Just as there is a division in the subaltern between athletic and nonathletic young men of color, regardless of race, gay males are further positioned as "subpersons" (Mills, 1998) of the school's underlife.

It should also be noted that during this study, trans and nonbinary students were not ever discussed as resonant to the lives of Black and brown youth or across the school's culture in general. Even in the GSA at the time, very few transgender or nonbinary youth were out.[12] The club was even called a "Gay-Straight Alliance," leaving out questions of gender expression and identity. This is not unusual, as many people conflate the LGBTGNQIA2S+ population under one umbrella, often overlooking the diversity of the acronym and collapsing sexual orientation with gender identity and expression, intersex individuals, and two-spirit folx.

Varenne and McDermott (1998) argue that culture is "not so much a product of sharing, as a product of people hammering each other into shape with the well-structured tools already available" (p. 326). The practice of pounding one's way of being into structured, socioculturally defined molds is similar to Mills' (1998) discussion of how exclusionary "contracts" shape social ontology. These contracts are imposed upon socially designated "subpersons," Mills' term that parallels Spivak's (1988) description of the "subaltern" to talk about marginalized people. These contracts are internalized to the point where they become habitus (Bourdieu, 1993) and are unquestioned and unquestionable. Divisions within groups of these

"subpersons" are common in the underlife of an institution. In other words, just because a group is marginalized does not remove in-group difference. In the context of marginalized students at Milford, layers of power within the subaltern existed as a status quo among marginalized students.

Connections of Space, Place, and Being

> The final bell has rung and the halls that once swelled with the near chaos of hundreds of students have dwindled down to a few dozen in scattered groups. Ten to fifteen students of color remain in Little Africa with the rise and fall of their chatter echoing in the nearly empty halls. Laughter punctuates the exchanges that are starting to wind down. Frequently, a boy, like Deryl, who is regarded as a group leader, without saying a word, will begin moving toward the doors. The rest of the group follows his cue, and the group moves out together. Today, Matt pulls out his cell phone and begins to play A$AP Rocky's "F★★kin' Problems"[13] as loudly as possible. The once-separate groups of boys and girls meld into one mass. Boys often shove each other as they continue to walk but the push generally causes a collision against one of the girls who promptly yells something and shoves him back. Toward the edge of the school property, they split into two groups and walk home to either Smithville or Hawks Corner, the high-pitched tinny beat of Matt's music still echoing back toward the school as they walk away.
>
> *(Fieldnotes, March 14, 2014)*

As is evident in the above vignette and throughout this and the previous chapter, schooling has a longstanding history of contributing to an adolescent Black awareness (Cooper, 1892; hooks, 1994; Woodson, 1933). These embodied understandings of self as Other have been thoroughly explored through their theoretical and material groundings and consequences within sociocultural norms and values (Love, 2019; Watkins, 2010). As normalized ideas of racism permeate school structures, the hidden curriculum (Apple, 1971; Giroux & Penna, 1983; Jackson, 1968) engenders schooling's systemic ideals of Other. In other words, as the hidden curriculum thrives, the business of marginalizing particular student populations also flourishes.

Shifting the focus away from the ways in which the hidden curriculum is reified through the classroom, this final vignette presents what I, following Mary Metz's (1978) lead, have come to think of as the experiences and curriculum of the corridor. This focus attends to the daily practices of school staff and administration in the hallways that implicitly and explicitly contribute to the racialized sociocultural norms and values propagated through the hidden curriculum. Whether it is through excessive stops to check passes, aggressive encounters with students, unequal enforcement of school policies, or an undercurrent of racialized

ideas that were openly vocalized by youth and adults, the curriculum of the corridor taught a social ontology of otherness. Boys of color were taught that their ways of being could not exceed those of a stereotyped urban Black male, a danger to be controlled in the school. Although their being in Little Africa enabled them to interact without the performance of self that included fighting, being present in the hall was also a form of legitimate surveillance for administrators and staff members. Similarly, girls of color learned that not only their actions but also their bodies were to be regulated by white ideas and ideals.

While research in schools often focuses on social and academic epistemologies that contribute to broader social framings of whiteness as property, these data reflect the ongoing contribution of a school's normalized racism within the hidden curriculum that is enacted between students, staff, and administration daily. As the hidden curriculum is nested within sociocultural norms and values within the school, it is also affective, taking place between bodies, an enactment of the everyday. Much like Bourdieu's (1993) discussion of fields, normalized sociocultural ideals are both implicitly a part of the background and explicitly enacted between local actors: as much a part of school policies as they are of the procedures carried out.

In addition, focusing on the experiences of the corridor highlights the ways that students of color in this context have used their agency to open up spaces and places in the school where the underlife of the institution (Goffman, 1961) can provide a safe space for marginalized student populations. As discussed in the introduction, power and agency are imbricated, as culture is enacted through and between local actors. Students in this case have used their agency in the construction of the underlife, including the power structures that are at play, such as the stratification of individual or group power within the subaltern. Indeed, in using their available wiggle room, students of color have offered this protected space to lesbian students while further oppressing gay male students. The next chapter explicates that safe spaces for students in academic classrooms are scarce, making these created corridor spaces even more important.

Finally, despite several in-group differences, students of color in this context have negotiated a place where they can just *be* against an oppressive formal and hidden curriculum of the corridor. This is no small accomplishment given the structure of the school. While all students of color were positioned to perform particular socioculturally designated roles, Little Africa functioned as a space within the underlife of the institution where they could relax into the group and be themselves for a moment. Further, using their own agency, they successfully carved out places where their own formal curriculum could be enacted against the boundaries and borders of other raced forms of curricula that existed in the school.

Little Africa is a place. Its boundaries and borders have (at least) dual significance. On one hand, they are between-group borders, socioculturally created to keep the status quo, an understanding of the Other created for and about students

of color. White students avoid this border while staff and administration reify it through their policies and procedures. On the other hand, boundaries are created by students of color that allow them to exercise agency and cultural capital within Little Africa in ways not easily enacted in other parts of the school. As Massey (2005) reminded us, "without multiplicity, no space" (p. 9). These distinct trajectories, which push for and against the agency of students of color, unfolded in the multiple ways of being and knowing of the corridors, and in particular in Little Africa.

Notes

1 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/singing.mp3
2 To hear this file, go to: https://youtu.be/nlcIKh6sBtc
3 For me, part of the tension between simultaneously being a researcher and teacher was making decisions about reportable information. Given the nature of this information, a report was made to the required mental health and law enforcement authorities. In addition, because it was so sensitive, I double checked with the participant and her parents to make sure everyone was comfortable with the inclusion of these details.
4 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/good-behavior.mp3
5 To review this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/unwanted.mp3
6 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/athletically-advantaged.mp3
7 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/reactions.mp3
8 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Dating-White-Girls.mp3
9 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/slave-feet.mp3
10 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/pajama-pants.mp3
11 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/army.mp3
12 After this study, however, the consistent activity of the GSA was eventually helpful in resisting the school's transphobic culture. Over time, a rather large number of trans and nonbinary students did come out, especially given the presence of a local group that focused on queer and especially trans rights.
13 To hear this file, go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liZm1im2erU

Bibliography

Agar, M. H. (1996). *The professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography* (2nd ed.). Academic Press.

Akinyemi, A., & Falola, T. (2020). *The Palgrave handbook of African oral traditions and folklore*. Springer International Publishing.

Ange, I. (1996). *Living room wars: Rethinking audiences for a post-modern world*. Routledge.

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.

Apple, M. W. (1971). The hidden curriculum and the nature of conflict. *Interchange, 2*(4), 27–40.

Arscott, J., Humphreys, J., Merwin, E., & Relf, M. (2020). "That guy is gay and Black. That's a red flag." How HIV stigma and racism affect perception of risk among young Black men who have sex with men. *AIDS and Behavior, 24*(1), 173–184.

Au, K. H. (1980). Participation structures in a reading lesson with Hawaiian children: Analysis of a culturally appropriate instructional event. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 11*(2), 91–115.

Ayers, N. Buendía, E. & Helfenbein, R. (2017). *Deterritorializing/reterritorializing: Critical geography of educational reform*. Sense Publishers.

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.

Barnhardt, R. (2005). Indigenous knowledge systems and Alaska native ways of knowing, *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 36*(1), 8–23.

Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural production*. Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture.* Sage.

Boykin, K. (2005). *Beyond the down low: Sex, lies, and denial in Black America.* Carroll & Gaf.

Butler, A., & Sinclair, K. A. (2020). Place matters: A critical review of place inquiry and spatial methods in education research. *Review of Research in Education, 44*(1), 64–96.

Butler, J. (1993). Critically queer. *GLQ, 1,* 17–32.

Caponi, G. D. (1999). *Signifyin(g), sanctifyin', and slam dunkin: A reader in African American expressive culture.* The University of Massachusetts Press.

Carbado, D. W. (2013). *Acting white?: Rethinking race in post-racial America.* Oxford University Press.

Carlson, D., Schramm-Pate, S. L., & Lussier, R. R. (2005). Risky business: Teaching about the confederate flag controversy in a South Carolina high school. In L. Weis & M. Fine (Eds.), *Beyond silenced voices: Class, race, and gender in United States schools* (pp. 217–232). State University of New York Press.

Christle, C. A., Jolivette, K., & Nelson, C. M. (2005). Breaking the school to prison pipeline: Identifying school risk and protective factors for youth delinquency. *Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal, 13*(2), 69–88.

Connell, C. (2016). Contesting racialized discourses of homophobia. *Sociological Forum, 31(3),* 599–618.

Constantino, R., & Faltis, C. (1998). Teaching against the grain in bilingual education. In Y. Zou and E. T. Trueba (Eds.), *Ethnic identity and power* (pp. 113–131). SUNY Press.

Cooper, A. J. (1892). *A voice from the South, by a Black woman from the South.* University of North Carolina Press.

Dancy, T. E., Edwards, K. T., & Earl Davis, J. (2018). Historically white universities and plantation politics: Anti-Blackness and higher education in the Black Lives Matter era. *Urban Education, 53*(2), 176–195.

DeCuir, J., & Dixson, A. (2004). "So when it comes out, they aren't that surprised that it is there": Using critical race theory as a tool of analysis of race and racism in education. *Educational Researcher, 33,* 26–31.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia.* University of Minnesota Press.

Dimitriadis, G. (2009). *Performing identity/performing culture: Hip hop as text, pedagogy, and lived practice.* Peter Lang.

Dixon-Román, E. (2017). *Inheriting possibility: Social reproduction & quantification in education*. Minnesota Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of Black folk*. McClurgand.

Eckert, P. (1989). *Jocks and burnouts: Social categories and identity in the high school*. Teachers College Press.

Ellis, J. (2005). Place and identity for children in classroom and schools. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, 3*(2), 55–73.

Emdin, C. (2016). *For White folks who teach in the hood . . . and the rest of y'all too: Reality pedagogy and urban education*. Beacon Press.

Emdin, C. (2021). *Ratchetdemic: Reimagining Academic Success.* Beacon Press.

Emdin, C., & Adjapong, E. S. (Eds.). (2018). *# HipHopEd: The compilation on hip-hop education: Volume 1: Hip-hop as education, philosophy, and practice.* Brill.

Erickson, F. (2004). *Talk and social theory.* Polity Press.

Fasching-Varner, K. J., Mitchell, R. W., Martin, L. L., & Bennett-Haron, K. P. (2014). Beyond school-to-prison pipeline and toward an educational and penal realism. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 47*(4), 410–429.

Fataar, A. (2019). Turning space into place: The place-making practices of school girls in the informal spaces of their high school. *Research in Education, 13*(1), 11–20.

Fleetwood, N. R. (2010). *Troubling vision: Performance, visuality, and blackness*. University of Chicago Press.

Fordham, S. (1993). "Those loud Black girls." (Black) women, silence, and gender "passing" in the academy. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 24*(1), 3–32.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: An introduction (Volume 1).* Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1980). Questions on geography. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977* (pp. 63–77). Pantheon Books.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Trans. M. B. Ramos. Continuum.

Gates, H. L. (1988). *The signifying monkey: A theory of African American literary criticism*. Oxford University Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretations of cultures*. Basic Books.

Gershon, W. S. (2013). Sonic cartography: Mapping, space, place, race and identity in an urban middle school. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education, 13*(1), 21–45.

Gershon, W. S. (2017). *Curriculum and students in classrooms: Everyday urban education in an era of standardization*. Lexington Books.

Gilbert, J. (2014). *Sexuality in school: The limits of education*. University of Minnesota Press.

Giroux, H., & Penna, A. (Eds.) (1983). *The hidden curriculum and moral education*. McCutchan.

Glissant, E. (1986). *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays.* Trans. J. Michael Dash. Caraf Books.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life.* Anchor Books.

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates.* Doubleday.

Gupta, A., & Ferguson, J. (1997). *Culture, power, place: Explorations in critical anthropology*. Duke University Press.

Halberstam, J. (2020). Wild things. In *Wild Things*. Duke University Press.

Hall, E. T. (1977). *Beyond culture.* Anchor Books.

Harmon, K. (2003). *You are here: Personal geographies and other maps of imagination*. Princeton Architectural Press.

Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review, 106*(8), 1707–1791.

Harvey, D. (1973). *Social justice and the city: Geographies of justice and social transformation*. University of Georgia Press.

Haynes Writer, J. (2008). Unmaking, exposing, and confronting: Critical race theory, tribal critical race theory and multicultural education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 10*(2), 1–5.

Helfenbein, R. J. (2010). Thinking through scale: Critical geographies and curriculum spaces. In E. Malewski (Ed.), *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment* (pp. 304–317). Routledge.

Helfenbein, R. (2012). New meridians: Social education and citizenship in a critical geography. In T. Kenreich (Ed.), *Geography and social justice in the classroom* (pp. 150–160). Routledge.

Helfenbein, R.J. (2021). *Critical geographies of education: Space, place, and curriculum inquiry.* Routledge.

hooks, b. (1992). *Black looks: Race and representation.* South End Press.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.

Ibrahim, A. (2014). *The rhizome of blackness: A critical ethnography of hip-hop culture, language, history, identity and the politics of becoming.* Peter Lang.

Inda, J. X. (2000). Performativity, materiality, and the racial body. *Latino Studies Journal, 11*(3), 74–99.

Irizarry, J. G., & Raible, J. (2014). "Hidden part of me": Latino/a students, silencing and the epidermalization of inferiority, *Equity & Excellence in Education, 47*(4), 430–444.

Jackson, P.W. (1968). *Life in classrooms.* Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Johnson, E. P. (2003). *Appropriating blackness: Performance and the politics of authenticity*. Duke University Press.

Johnson, E. P. (Ed.). (2016). *No tea, no shade: New writings in black queer studies*. Duke University Press.

Jones, G. (1991). *Liberating voices: Oral tradition in African American literature.* Harvard University Press.

Jones, N. (2009). *Between good and ghetto: African American girls and inner-city violence.* Rutgers University Press.

Kaplan, H. R. (2007). Freedom to hate: Weighing first amendment rights against school violence. A case study, *Journal of School Violence, 6*(4), 149–163.

Kim, C. Y., Losen, D. J., & Hewitt, D. (2010). *The school-to-prison pipeline: Structuring legal reform*. New York University Press.

Kozol, J. (2005). *Shame of the nation. The restoration of apartheid schooling in America.* Random House.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children.* Jossey-Bass.

Land, R. R., & Stovall, D. O. (2009). Hip hop and social justice education: A brief education. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 42*(1), 1–5.

Laura, C. T. (2014). *Being bad: My baby brother and the school-to-prison pipeline.* Teachers College Press.

Leonardo, Z. (2002). The souls of white folk: Critical pedagogy, whiteness studies, and globalization discourse. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 5*(1), 29–50.

Light, A., & Smith, J. M. (Eds.). (1998). *Philosophy and geography III: Philosophies of place.* Rowman & Littlefield.

Love, B. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Beacon Press.

Massey, D. (1993). Questions of locality. *Geography, 78,* 142–149.

Massey, D. (2005). *For space.* Sage.

Mayo, C. (2018). Intersections, ambivalence, and racial justice in schools: Black queer students remap complexity. *Teachers College Record, 120*(14), 1–22.

McGranahan, C. (2016). Theorizing refusal: An introduction. *Cultural Anthropology, 31*(3), 319–325.

McLaren, P. (2002). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education* (4th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

Menon, R. (1998). *Borders and boundaries: How women experienced the partition of India*. Rutgers University Press.

Metz, M. H. (1978). *Classrooms and corridors: The crisis of authority in desegregated secondary schools.* Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Meiners, E. (2016). *For the children?: Protecting innocence in a carceral state.* University of Minnesota Press.

Mills, C. W. (1998). *Blackness visible: Essays on philosophy and race.* Cornell University Press.

Morris, M. (2016). *Pushout: The criminalization of Black girls in schools.* The New Press.

Nespor, J. (1997). *Tangled up in school: Politics, space, bodies and signs in the educational process.* Lawrence Erlbaum.

Noguera, P. A. (2003). Schools, prisons, and social implications of punishment: Rethinking disciplinary practices. *Theory into Practice, 42*(4), 341–350.

Norris, J., Bhattacharya, K., & Powell, K. (2020). Embodying moral discourses through arts-based methodologies: Poetry, visual arts, movement, sounds, and performance. *Cultural Studies <> Critical Methodologies, 21*(1), 4–6.

Orozco, R. A. (2011). "It is certainly strange . . .": attacks on ethnic studies and whiteness as property. *Journal of Education Policy, 26*(6), 819–838.

Pascoe, C. J. (2007). *Dude, you're a fag: Masculinity and sexuality in high school*. University of California.

Pink, S. (2007). *Doing visual ethnography* (2nd ed). London, England: Sage.

Powell, K. (2010). Making sense of place: Mapping as multisensory research method. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(7), 539–555.

Quinn, T., & Meiners, E. R. (2009). *Flaunt it!: Queers organizing for public education and justice.* Peter Lang.

Rahder, M. (2020). *An ecology of knowledges.* Duke University Press.

Remes, P. (1991). Rapping: A sociolinguistic study of oral tradition in Black urban communities in the United States. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford, 22*(2), 129–149.

Rose, T. (1991). "Fear of a Black planet": Rap music and Black cultural politics in the 1990s. *The Journal of Negro Education, 60*(3), 276–290.

Schwalbe, M. L. (1993). Goffman against postmodernism: Emotion and the reality of the self. *Symbolic Interaction, 16*(4), 333–350.

Sharpe, C. (2016). *In the wake: On blackness and being.* Duke University Press.

Simpson, A. (2014). *Mohawk interruptus: Political life across the borders of settler states.* Duke University Press.

Smith, W. A., Allen, W. R., & Danley, L. L. (2009). "Assume the position . . . you fit the description": Psychosocial experiences and racial battle fatigue among African American male college students, *American Behavioral Scientist, 51*(4), 551–578.

Smith, W. A., Hung, M., & Franklin, J. D. (2011). Racial battle fatigue and the miseducation of Black men: Microaggressions, societal problems, & environmental stress. *Journal of Negro Education, 80*(1), 63–82.

Snaza, N., Sonu, D., Truman, S. E., & Zaliwska, Z. (Eds.) (2016). *Pedagogical matters: New materialisms and curriculum studies.* Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Soja, E. W. (2010). *Seeking spatial justice.* University of Minnesota Press.

Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). University of Illinois Press.

Talbert, R. D., & Patterson, E. J. (2020). Racial stratification and the Confederate flag: Comparing four perspectives to explain flag support. *Race and Social Problems*, 1–13.

Tatum, B. D. (2003). *"Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?": And other conversations about race.* Basic Books.

Truman, S. (2021). *Feminist speculations and the practice of research-creation: Writing pedagogies and intertextual affects.* Routledge.

Tsing, A. L. (2005). *Friction: An ethnography on global connection.* Princeton University Press.

Tuan, Y. F. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience.* University of Minnesota Press.

Valente, J. (2011). *d/DEAF and d/DUMB: A portrait of a deaf kid as a young superhero.* Peter Lang Publishing.

Varenne, H., & McDermott, R. (1998). *Successful failure: The school America builds.* Westview.

Watkins, W. H. (2010). Black curriculum orientations: A preliminary inquiry. *Harvard Educational Review, 63*(3), 321–339.

Wilson, D. R. (2021). Sexual exploitation of Black women from the years 1619–2020. *Journal of Race, Gender, and Ethnicity, 10*(1), 13.

Winfield, A. G. (2007). *Eugenics and education in America: Institutionalized racism and the impact of history, ideology, and memory.* Peter Lang Publishing.

Wolcott, H. F. (1990). *Writing up qualitative research.* Sage.

Wood, D. (2010). *Rethinking the power of maps.* Guilford Press.

Woodson, C. G. (1933). *The mis-education of the negro.* Tribecca Press.

Wozolek, B. (2018). M/othering redoux: A reading of curriculum theory to get through sleepless nights. *The Journal of Gender Studies, 28*(8), 873–872.

Wozolek, B. (2021). *Assemblages of violence in education: Everyday trajectories of oppression.* Routledge.

5

INTERLUDE

Recapitulation and Re-membering

When I was an undergraduate, I visited my family's ancestral house in India every summer during monsoon. Without a driver's license and few friends in the country, I often sat quietly in the afternoon while my grandmother napped, watching the rain fall from the veranda and waiting for my cousin to pick me up after work. As I waited, my gaze often rested on the red mud that swirled in the dip just below the gate at the property's edge while I listened to the squealing of piglets that somehow managed to carry over the sound of thick raindrops bombarding the clay-tiled roof. Although in some cities the petrol-laden smell of pollution hangs in the air like a thick blanket, the villages are different, especially during monsoon. The scent of a neighbor cooking was nearly choked out by a breeze, heavy with moisture and new life. Yet the aroma of fish curry softly hit my senses, teasing my stomach as I waited for my cousin with the hope that my grandmother might rouse and make some tea if he was delayed, which he usually was, due to the rain. I would happily make my own tea, but my grandmother's kitchen was sacred and, although I was twenty-something, I hesitated to touch anything in the space without permission.

As if she could sense my stomach rumbling, my grandmother would often rise early from her nap, muttering things like "*demprancher nidonk jai*" ("In the afternoon, you need to sleep") in Konkani as she shuffled into the kitchen. Within minutes she would emerge, hissing gently to call me inside. While the rest of the village had settled in for *dempar* (afternoon nap), we would sit at the kitchen table, talking about her childhood over a cup of chai and a plate of sheera, a traditional Indian sweet. As she prattled on, I would think to myself, "Soak this in. Memorize every moment," fearing that the memory would fade the second I returned to the United States. Despite my best efforts, the images now seem like Monet paintings, soft at the edges with a few bright colors that stand out in my mind. When I settle

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245-6

in for chai and sheera in the United States, the taste never matches what I recall from those afternoon talks, even when I use the recipe I once scribbled down on a napkin on a rainy afternoon in her kitchen.

Memory is fickle. One only needs to think about a context where the senses were ignited, when food, or music, or touch resonated strongly in the moment in ways that cannot ever be fully recreated. Perhaps this is because unless a person is gifted with hyperthymesia—the ability to remember an abnormally large number of life experiences in vivid detail—memory is a negotiation between moments (Ally et al., 2013). Rather than a static idea of memories, here I attend to memory as an event. Much like Barad's (2007) dialogue on how events produce agency and subjectivities, I ruminate on the many ways that memory can similarly be considered productive in terms of what emerges from the act of re-calling memories.

On a physiological level, memory recall and recognition involve a relational replaying between multiple centers of the brain, which vary depending on the type of memory, the senses involved, and the method of recall. Through memory storage and recall, a kind of re-establishment of neural activity is generated that exists in relation to the original event being committed to and pulled from memory (Moscovitch et al., 2016). One way this can be conceptualized is as a reverberation, a process of retrieving the event that is never completely identical to the original moment. Each time a memory is recalled, the pathways are (re)established and altered slightly by the act of remembering (Staresina & Wimber, 2019). Memories are therefore fluid, changing and being challenged as people engage them.

Memories do not exist in a mental vacuum, either. Recalling them is complex not only in terms of the neurophysical act of retrieval but also because remembering is nested and layered by a person's current emotions, contexts, coping efforts, and personality traits (Levine & Safer, 2002), as well as through broader collective, or cultural, memory (Halbwachs, 2020; Winfield, 2007). Collective memory, as Winfield (2007) argues, is not random or apolitical. Rather, collective memory is a fairly structured way of re-membering the past through a distorted lens, one that often reduces complex narratives to shape individual and community actions toward a common set of ideas and ideals. I use the term "re-member" intentionally. Similar to Dillard's (2021) dialogue, I am framing the act of re-membering from the position of collective memory involves recalling events as they are entangled with sociocultural and political values that order narratives within hegemonic systems. In schools, collective memory is central to curricular practices that engender and preserve knowledges from the white cisheteropatriarchy, or the ontoepistemologies of what Fanon (1963) referred to as the colonized intellectual.

Memories, and the act of engaging with them (or deciding not to), are both a process and product of entangled events. I use event both literally and metaphorically. As memories are de- and reterritorialized (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) through connections enforced or forgotten over time, they are intraconnected with past and present contexts and exist in relation to local and less-local

collective memory, which dictate not only how events are recalled but also how a person might act on them. Memory is therefore agentic, a "dynamism of forces" (Barad, 2007, p. 141). The agency of memory emerges from the intra-actions between bodies, from our neurons to our coping mechanisms, to our contexts, ordinary affects, and the (un)intentionally remembered and forgotten collective histories that shape what and how things are recalled. I draw on several inroads to discuss the agency of memory, including Barad's (2007) agential realism, indigenous dialogues focused on the memory of place (e.g., Freeman, 2010; Simpson, 2014; Smith et al., 2019), and their intersections (e.g., Rosiek et al., 2020). These complicated conversations sit alongside, and sometimes entangled with, other dialogues, such as those focused on the African diaspora (e.g., Fanon, 1963; Glissant, 1997), Chicano histories (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987), critical geography (Helfenbein, 2021), and queer theory (e.g., Castiglia & Reed, 2012).

As memories become distorted by the very process of recalling events, it is more likely that a person will correctly retrieve an event that they had not thought about in years than one they have gone over in their minds several times (Patihis et al., 2018). Collective memory is equally distorted—a sociopolitical shaping of the past to maintain the status quo. At the intersection of the physical act of recalling events and collective memory, a person's reflexivity can readily deceive them. This is what makes gaslighting so effective. It can be hard for a person to reconstruct a memory while broader collective memory actively refuses the version of events that they experienced.

This is also how people and groups become gaslit through the curriculum. What gets re-membered is inherently a curricular entanglement. As histories intra-act through the phenomena of remembering and agency emerges, curricular memories form and inform whose voices and perspectives become heard and whose remain silenced. Herbert Spencer's (1859) essay "What knowledge is of most worth?" is therefore a curricular engagement with memory, attending to reverberations found in dominant narratives and echoes felt through the movements that emerge from silenc(e)ing—curricular memories that are *in-action* (Schwab, 1969). Much like sound travels and is dampened by objects in its wake, the curriculum is designed to silence, minimize, and amplify different sociopolitical and cultural histories. Dominant ideologies persist in systems of schooling because, as Barad (2007) argues, power remains central to how agency emerges through intra-actions. As histories become remembered and then collectively enacted (Winfield, 2007) in schools, they normalize the everyday violence that flows between schools and communities (Amos, 2018; Quinn & Meiners, 2009). Although educational philosophers and activists resist and refuse violent educational practices and policies (e.g., Davis, 2016; Lynn & Dixson, 2013; Pinar, 2012; Urrieta, 2009), working against memory and the act of re-membering through schools means not only countering collective memory but also re-establishing individual neuropathways that were constructed through teaching with/in the distorted narrative of a white, cishetero, patriarchal lens.

Scholars across educational disciplines have thought critically about the forms of curriculum as they relate to what and who becomes re-membered in schools, attending to how these lessons leak into local and less-local spaces and places (e.g., Cooper, 1892; Kliebard, 1987; Malewski, 2009; Pinar et al., 1995; Woodson, 1933). Following Nespor's (1997) argument, rather than untangling the threads of schooling, these nested chapters aim to look at curricula, the school, and local actors as a "knot in a web of practices that stretch into complex systems . . . fluid in form and content; as intersections of multiple networks" (p. xiii). In other words, they attend to the assemblages of schooling.

Assemblages are complex intrarelations between human and nonhuman bodies where time, spaces, and places are knotted. Take, for example, an assemblage of violence (Wozolek, 2021). Attending to violence as an assemblage is one way to conceptualize aggressions in their multiplicity. Despite the potential for violence to seem singular in its expression, considering assemblages through their intra-related parts provides another lens to think about how everyday aggressions are engendered, maintained, and, possibly, how they might be interrupted. Think, for example, of the many ways that violence was recursive in the narratives presented in Chapters 3 and 4. Students faced not only one but multiple, overlapping reverberations of violence in their lives at school. The white cishetero curricula written for and by colonizers resonates across groups, reinforcing and normalizing marginalization for both the oppressors and the oppressed (Sabzalian, 2019). Educational necropolitics is central to violent curricular assemblages, as the white, cishetero patriarchy is positioned to decide which ontoepistemologies can thrive, which should be devalued and choked away, and which should be murdered (Love, 2019). Further, educational necropolitics is central to which histories are eradicated, which are re-membered, and which become forms of a curricular living dead. Conceptualizing multiple networks as entwined within these violent lessons and pedagogies is important to resisting—and perhaps refusing—oppression as normalized curriculum in school.

In addition, thinking critically about the intricacies of multiple forms of curriculum allows educational stakeholders to consider whose voices are amplified and whose are silenced. As Lisa Delpit (2005) argues, education, and its associated movements, is largely "lacking in the diverse harmonies, the variegated rhythms, and the shades of tone expected in a truly heterogeneous chorus" (p. 11). Aligned with Delpit's argument, this chapter draws on the multiplicity of voices and perspectives from the proceeding chapters that students of color brought to Milford that interrupted, resisted, and refused what could be heard as monovocal curricula.

Finally, this attention to the complex nature of curriculum unfolds a space to engage with the affective nature of curricula. The ordinary affects (Stewart, 2007) in constant circulation across the assemblages of our lives are endemic to the knotted, nested, and layered forms of curriculum. Affects are theoretically and materially consequential, existing between "ecologies, feelings, ideas, ideals, processes, experiences and events" (Gershon, 2013, p. 4). Imagining an affective

curriculum—one that reaches beyond itself and resonates within and against bodies—and curricular affects—the visceral forces that are coconstituted within curricula—constructs a critical space to trace knowledges that simultaneously impact and are emergent from and through human and nonhuman bodies.

What one learns across contexts, both in and outside of school, is therefore inexorably connected to the way one is and how one comes to know about the world. This transaction, as Dewey and Bentley (1949) argued, is reciprocal. Read through the texts of scholars like Cooper (1892), Du Bois (1903), and Woodson (1933), this reciprocity is the intersection and entwining of one's ontoepistemologies with the sociopolitical. Similar to Schwab's (1969) work on the curriculum in-action, here I attend to the affective action between what is learned and how such lessons become entangled with and rooted in bodies.

Including affect as it is entangled with ways of being, knowing, and doing is central to recognizing the relationships between local actors and forms of curriculum. Although Western educational ideologies have historically situated epistemology within a mind-body split (Kincheloe, 2006; Sabzalian, 2019), decolonial educational traditions and fields like curriculum theory, educational philosophy, and educational foundations have attended to the inextricable knot between ordinary affects and ontoepistemologies (e.g., Stein et al., 2020). These represent an intentional refusal of the Cartesian split by scholars across critical traditions. Because affects are constantly in motion in, between, and around bodies (Ahmed, 2010), curricular affects are similarly in relation with bodies. If a student of color learns about their historical roots only through slavery, the lesson affects them. Such lessons also affect broader hidden curricula as students develop understandings of an entire group's historical underpinnings through a singular framework. As sociocultural ideas and ideals develop from the hidden curriculum, the enacted curricula in and between students and staff becomes one of racialized understandings. In short, all forms of curriculum push at bodies that, in turn, inform the curriculum. The consequences of the curriculum are therefore not only theoretical but also material in ways that might be constraining or enabling, depending on one's positionality.

Understood as affective, or as in-action (Schwab, 1969), the curricula become embodied practice. By embodied practice, I mean "any bodily act that conveys meaning . . . that [are] embodied and performed acts that generate, record and transmit knowledge" (Mitchell, 2011, p. 5). Theorizing curriculum as affect means emphasizing the many ways that actions affect and are affected by bodies. The curricula, like all intra-actions between bodies, can generate, record, and transmit knowledge (Barad, 2007; Hall, 1996; McKittrick, 2021). Remembering that thoughts and feelings are inseparable from the human experience—and form how memories are retrieved—they too are affected by embodied practices.

While this argument aligns well with other scholars who have discussed embodied practices and knowledges (e.g., Bresler, 2013; Browne, 2015; Johnson, 1989; Rosaldo, 1993), I extend these discussions to how these ways of being,

knowing, and doing are both instructive for both individuals *and* cultures. Mitchell (2011) specifically links this transmission of knowledge to acts of violence, such as lynching. Through necropolitical curricula, practices, and policies in schools, education is often institutionally violent toward students of color and other marginalized youth through embodied practices that propagate social conditions which encourage, engender, and maintain ontoepistemological death and dying. This includes the acts of teaching, learning, and being with/in curricular forms (Jackson, 1968; Rodriguez et al., 2016; Varenne & McDermott, 1998).

Within cultural webs of significance spun by local actors to contextualize ways of knowing and being (Geertz, 1973), the embodied practices of curricula that carry out this knowledge become an important part of broader collective memory. It matters how the forms of curricula—formal, hidden, enacted, and null—became re-membered in the school context, especially given the consequences for students of color whose rhythms are affected by the monotonal curricula. In the final few pages of this chapter, I trace the trajectories of educational necropolitics through the curricular encounters described in Chapters 3 and 4 to consider where and how educational choking and lynching can be interrupted, resisted, and refused.

A cursory glance at the U.S. history curriculum at Milford makes clear how formal curricular practices often silenced voices while amplifying colonizer perspectives, polluting the curricula across other forms. The formal curriculum did call for slavery to be covered during the academic year—but only in broad strokes. Dates were given in ranges, violent details were often absent, and the economic benefits to the United States were discussed with more clarity than the toll human trafficking and enslavement took on an entire continent. Aside from slavery, as mentioned briefly in the introduction to this book through María's quote, one of the only points of exposure to blackness in Milford's U.S. history course was through the Civil Rights Movement. While riots and protests were discussed, the U.S history teacher who participated in this study, Mr. Barrigan, only covered what he referred to as "the big names": Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. Even Ms. Parks' narrative was flattened, portraying only a "tired old Black woman" rather than engaging with her participation in the movement prior to and after her arrest. The null curriculum, or the content that is implicitly and explicitly not taught to students (Eisner, 1985), reverberated loudly as the voices and names of others like Bayard Rustin, Pauli Murray, Claudette Colvin, Charles Hamilton Houston, or Dion Diamond were absent from the school.

Teaching about the enslavement of Africans and Civil Rights as the only two points of reference for blackness in the United States creates a hidden curriculum of racial value. The hidden curriculum includes the implicit and explicit messages that are normalized in and through schools that are often hidden to those who enact them (Jackson, 1968). As Reba Page (2006) argued, a racialized formal curriculum "only exacerbates the operation and effects of the 'hidden curriculum'" (p. 52). At Milford, because blackness was almost a footnote to the formal

curriculum, it became devalued in the hidden curriculum as well, reinscribing dominant ideals about Black lives as something that rarely mattered.

These values were rampant in the enacted curriculum, or what students learned through intra-acting with each other, the school, the formal and null curricula, entangled histories, and local and less-local communities. Like all curricular forms, the enacted curriculum was embodied—impacting, forming, and informing ontoepistemologies through intra-actions. It is no surprise, then, that students of color endured physical and emotional violence from their white peers, teachers, and administrators. Or, as Woodson (1933) wrote, "Why not exploit, enslave, or exterminate a class that everybody is taught to regard as inferior?" (p. 3). Why not use educational necropolitics to control those who are re-membered as inferior and troubl(e)ing to sociocultural and political norms through every aspect of schooling?

6

FRAMED, AGAIN

The collective memory of Milford High School is constructed through local and less-local power structures that shape memory for public consumption. Memories can be understood as fluid and emergent phenomena (Flint, 2018), intra-actions between histories, contemporary moments, systems of power, and local actors. Although oppressors are able to exert more power to shape it in a particular way, collective memory is a phenomenon that, like all phenomena, coconstitutes agency, subjects, and power (Barad, 2007). This structure enables and normalizes a collective memory where students of color are framed as a problem (Du Bois, 1903).

In schools, collective memory can be found across all forms of curriculum. As collective curricular memories intersected with Milford High School during my study, students of color were implicitly and explicitly positioned as "trouble." These collective memories and the people that are impacted by them, as Winfield (2007) argues, are not re-membered by accident. They were socioculturally maintained both at Milford and through its surrounding community. For example, it was not unusual for the school's statistics on standardized tests and college readiness to be presented at staff meetings in terms of categories based in race, gender, and (dis)ability. While such demographic information can also be used for social justice work to demonstrate how particular groups are marginalized, at Milford, the opposite occurred, as marginalized student populations were discussed in these meetings as a "problem" when it came to improving test scores.

The year I conducted this study, a particularly salient example occurred during a staff meeting, from which I was absent. As she reported to me, Mrs. Smith, a tall white veteran teacher whose son is biracial, felt irate after the meeting. She informed me that the principal had stood "in front of everyone and basically explained how shitty the Black kids are." She noted that the slides and their accompanying presentation depicted students of color negatively, leaving out a

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245-7

balanced explanation as to why their scores might be "low." The solution presented by administration, as she explained, was for teachers to find ways to better reach "those kids." She was upset because the marginalizing language and graphics were presented without any specific tools or suggestions.

I was familiar with this framing of students of color. In past meetings, I had been handed forms with similar statistics that highlighted the numbers pertaining to minority populations as a concern to be addressed. Other teachers complained about these meetings in different ways, explaining that they were not equipped to address these "special needs" or complaining that if students of color "don't care, why should we?" The framing of students of color as a statistical and cultural problem within the school is discussed throughout this chapter. I explore the ways that their differences were viewed as deficits (Delpit, 2005; Dixon-Román, 2017; Oakes, 1985) and how such deficits were often perceived as a problem that should not burden the staff. Despite the emergence of asset-based pedagogy in the years prior to this study (e.g., Lindsey et al., 2010; Paris, 2012), the school remained comfortable in antiquated models that dehumanized and disenfranchised students of color.

Despite any possible intentions among those running these meetings to help raise awareness about the challenges students of color faced, the explicit message was that these students were a problem in classrooms and in terms of the testing practices that were tied to state funding. At the time of the study, standardized test scores were beginning to appear in state and national conversations on implementing merit pay, such that teachers' salaries would eventually be tied to students' test performance. Teachers therefore received these messages with a degree of alarm because, as one teacher explained, "What am I supposed to do when *those kids* affect how much money is in my bank?" Further, in the case of the slides that Mrs. Smith shared from the troubling meeting (Figure 6.1), this information

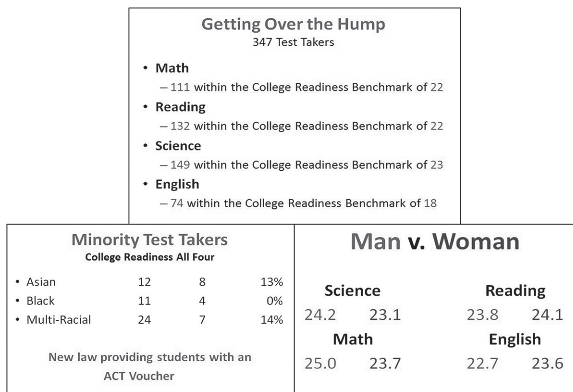


FIGURE 6.1 Slides presented at a staff meeting to increase awareness of low-scoring groups

reproduced raced and gendered expectations for students. This was particularly damaging for the girls of color whose experiences with/in echo chambers of oppression were doubled through raced and gendered violence (Crenshaw, 1991; Du Bois, 1903; Lather, 2017).

As a result of these systemic and contextualized messages, students of color were often positioned for anticipated failure at Milford. When they succeeded, they became the exception to the rule. When they failed due to barriers related to either perceived behavioral or academic obstacles, they were the rule. In sum, not meeting the school's ideals of success often became a self-fulfilling prophecy for students of color (Laura, 2014; Rist, 1970). The idea that a deficit model often prompts such self-fulfilling prophecies is certainly not new (e.g., Delpit, 2005; Rist, 1970; Varenne & McDermott, 1998). While the last nested set of chapters considered how students of color were framed as a social problem within the corridors, this set of nested chapters (Chapters 6 and 7) explores how these same students are framed as an academic problem, both implicitly and explicitly, within Milford classrooms. I emphasize how nested forms of curricula that reinscribe dominant whitestream (white-mainstream) values of the school affect young people of color, recasting these children to the margins.

While listening to any complex space, certain sounds often initially resonate with the listener, pulling their ear toward and across human and nonhuman bodies. As you spend more time in a context, other sounds are heard more easily as your ear turns toward and away from certain sounds. Similarly, as I listened to the maps recorded by students, my ear was drawn to classroom experiences. While there are many possible reasons for this, not the least of which was my role at the time as a classroom teacher, I have foregrounded narratives that emerged from classrooms because those were some of the most recorded places. This chapter therefore begins by discussing students' experiences in classrooms. This dialogue is followed by a description of spaces where students of color are arrested by sociocultural norms in ways that restrict the wiggle room sought in the underlife of the institution. Finally, this layer of narratives concludes by reflecting on where and how students of color found some degree of agency within these educational spaces.

Historical Amnesia: Shackled by Memories

> It is the week before homecoming and students are participating in spirit week, where they wear clothes that correspond with themes designated by the student council. One day, for example, was "Coke versus Pepsi" day, and students wore either red or blue clothes to demonstrate their allegiances to either brand. Another was "-er" day, where students dress in clothes that resemble anything ending in "-er" (e.g., painter, dancer, teacher). Deryl walked past a group of teachers, including myself. A colleague asked, "What are you supposed to be?" He smiled widely and replied, "I'm two

things . . . A rapper preacher," pointing to his collar and chains. As he walked away, a white colleague leaned into the group and said, "I thought he was another name that ended with –er . . . Ni . . ." and stops to laugh. Another colleague shook her head and said, "You've got to find a new joke. You said that one last year for a different spirit day." The group chuckled and resumed their conversation while Deryl turned to go to the restroom at the end of the corridor.

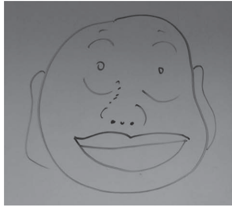
A few days later, Jahmir was walking into his language arts class. A white classmate blocked the door with his body and shouted loudly, "Get to the back of the bus! No one wants you learning in here!" At first Jahmir tried to push his way through, but the boy's arms were braced in the doorway. Eventually, he began to wait patiently until the bell rang and the boy ran to his seat. The teacher, not hearing or perhaps not acknowledging the incident, cleared his throat and said, "Ok . . . ok . . . Let's just get seated." Jahmir dashed quickly to his seat without saying a word.

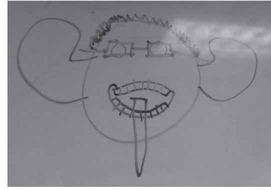
The same day, Andrew entered a classroom early to find a picture on the board drawn by one of his classmates (Figure 5.2, Day 1). His name was written underneath with an arrow pointing to the image. He shouted, "What the fuck?" and moved to erase the image. The loud exclamation by a voice recognized caught my attention as I was walking by, causing me to peek into the classroom. Seeing the image, I took a photo of it to show the teacher and erased it quickly to prevent other children from viewing it as they entered the room.[1] Andrew sat in silent anger at his seat while he and I waited for the teacher to return. He would later reveal that this became a pattern and, as he felt comfortable, brought in pictures of drawings as they occurred (Figure 6.2, Day 2).

Not too much later, Amani, hearing of these injustices, took a photo of a classmate's agenda planner that he had decorated with a confederate flag cut to spell out the word "rebel" against a camouflage background (Figure 6.3). "See!" he said indignantly, "These assholes get away with everything! This kid sits in the front row with this out all the time. How does the teacher not see that? How does she not care?"

Sound File: Do You Do Drugs?[2]

As students of color arrived at class each day, they were frequently affected by the attitudes of their teachers and the explicit discrimination of their peers. Similar to the multiple times that students were interrupted in the corridors in the sound file "Getting Stopped"[3] in Chapter 2, this chapter explicates the difficulty students of color faced when they were on their way to academic places, just prior to the start of class, or during instructional time. Students of color, like all students, were positioned to perform a particular version of themselves through schooling (Goffman, 1959). However, students of color felt—and my data confirmed—that





DAY 1 **DAY 2**

FIGURE 6.2 Images drawn on the board by a white student to represent Andrew

FIGURE 6.3 Agenda of a white student decorated with camouflage and the word "REBEL" spelled out with a confederate flag

when they did not perform the expected roles, they often got in trouble more quickly and received more severe punishment than white students.

As discussed in the preceding chapters, the racialized hidden and enacted curricula were carried out in places like Little Africa and throughout the corridors of the school. Examples include students of color experiencing excessive stops in the hall, young women of color receiving harsher punishments than white peers for their attire, and tolerance of the "N-word" used verbally and in writing by white students in front of faculty and administration. The vignettes above can be read as an extension of these injustices and, while difficult to hear, were normalized experiences at Milford. These racialized forms of curriculum became the vehicle through which both teachers and students felt comfortable making openly racist jokes (in both verbal and artistic expressions) and the mechanism through which marginalizing policies and practices were enforced. These practices and their associated noninterventions provided pathways for future iterations of violence, such as the common use of the "N-word" by white students

toward each other, who often argued that the term was neutral because of its use in pop culture and by Black students at school.

This appropriation of language was also present in the morning video announcements, when, on occasion, white students would attempt to use Black vernacular in the opening screen text under school events—not always with success. For example, in the case of the announcement in Figure 6.4, the on-screen text read "stuco fo da bros during 12th" to announce a student council meeting during 12th period. But, as Sierra noted, "The most fucked up part is that it's not 'fo da bros,' it's for everyone . . . boys AND girls. They're talking Black without even knowing what they're saying. Tell me that's not messed up!" Students of color frequently expressed frustration at incidents like these, because, as Sierra continued, if they "spoke this way, [they] would be considered 'too' Black but white kids [could] use the same language without anyone thinking twice." In other words, one could "act Black" without actually being Black, but being Black and "acting Black" at the same time fell under racialized understandings of being and knowing.

Historical amnesia (Hall, 1996) permitted these events to function as if in isolation from both the current cultural context as well as broader sociopolitical histories. For example, if one places mid-to-late-1800s depictions of minstrel Blackface actors or the menacing "Buck" next to the white Milford students' drawings of African American and biracial male students of African descent (Figure 6.5), the newer images clearly align with the history of racism that is central marginalizing populations of color both in and outside of the classroom. Further, these images evoke no-longer-so-implicit cultural memories about African American males as "fools" or "aggressors." While boys of color in the school sometimes intentionally played into the image of the "angry Black man" to gain cultural capital at school, as Jahmir noted in Chapter 3, white students and faculty were also responsible for perpetuating these stereotypes. While students of color acted within socioculturally accepted performances of self (Goffman, 1959), this image was not only reinscribed but engendered by the broader community of students and staff through actions like, but not limited to, the stories above.

FIGURE 6.4 An opening picture for the video announcements

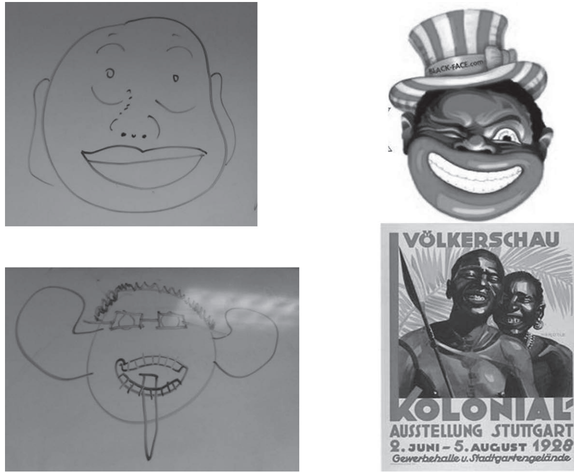


FIGURE 6.5 Students' depictions of African Americans placed next to similar historical images

These peer-instigated injustices became more violent as teachers allowed them to continue largely unabated. Indeed, students of color frequently expressed that they felt no respite from discrimination during instructional time. For example, Sienna reported that one afternoon she was instructed to turn her desk to face the wall in class because the teacher had "enough of her" for the day, citing that she was "too loud" for the class. As the only Black student in the course, she explained that this made her feel further isolated. Students generally reported that these kinds of extreme incidents were rather uncommon, making their primary complaint the lack of representation in the formal curriculum. Similar to María's quote in the introduction, Raquel also explained, "These book ain't got none of my people up in 'em unless they're in shackles or breakin' 'em."

Sound File: Ancestors[4]

The formal curriculum, in this case an intended lesson about slavery, was nested within a hidden curriculum where Black students' ancestral histories were exoticized in ways that often-positioned Black students as token representatives for slavery in the United States.[5] Both Raquel and the students in the sound file above express a deep displeasure with blackness being reduced to either subservience (i.e., slavery) or a problem (i.e., protesting during the Civil Rights era), as these ideas were nested within the formal, hidden, and null curricula.

Many of the students in this study identified personal and familial experiences with historical traumas (including enslavement) that informed the way they coped with and responded to violence in contemporary contexts. These generational traumas reverberated with the collective memory that was relationally shaped and

shifted by enacted and hidden curricula in the school, re-membering bodies as they moved through it. The formal and null curricula were central to this process of re-membering, gaslighting students during instructional time by denying or devaluing the countermemories of their communities in the classroom. This process of re-membering through different forms of curriculum contributes to a social ontology (Mills, 1998) where people of color are positioned as either "in shackles or breaking them."

Finally, curricula affected white students as well, as they maintained the foundations from which collective memories were constructed and normalized. The following clip is from an interview with Matt, a lanky white ninth grade student whose open racism and wish to join lingering but active branches of the Ku Klux Klan often pervaded interviews as he discussed his open distain for students of color in the school. He felt both that the curriculum supported his position and, as can be heard in the file below, that many teachers also shared his views but that they couldn't openly express these opinions as professionals. The interview format that Matt chose was to record his answers to a set of written questions and then have a follow-up interview after I had reviewed the file. He explained that this was the best format so he could speak freely in the first recording without feeling as though I would challenge his answers.

In the follow-up interview, I asked him how he came to these understandings. His answer was simply,

> This is just how the world remembers the past because that's how it was. We [white people] have always been superior. Just look at what we learn. Of course that's the truth. Why else would it be okay to teach that in schools?

In another follow-up interview with Raquel, she said something similar: "They don't exactly teach that we (people of color) have value, right? Why not believe it. Why not make it who you are?" These students articulate two sides of the same coin, namely, they echoed and amplified Woodson's (1933) words about schools (un)intentionally instilling notions of inferiority for marginalized people and communities.

> Sound File: Downfall of the World[6]

Notes

1 Although in this case I elected to report the incident to the teacher, one of the most difficult ethical boundaries I wrestled with during this study was that of reporting such events while working to protect participants, to whom I had a moral and legal obligation to protect their privacy as informants. As a result, I used member checking during and after the study to determine what students were comfortable with my reporting to administration or other staff members. As I either observed these experiences or had them brought to my attention, I worked to position myself to make these judgment calls

in the best interest of the children. I find that, even while analyzing the data, I still struggle with these dilemmas and their effects on my dual position as a teacher-researcher.

2 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/drugs.mp3

3 To review this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Getting-stopped.mp3

4 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ancestors.mp3

5 To be clear, such curricular absences exist across minoritized voices. In this study, the students who reported on curricular impacts identified as Black, Latinx, or multiracial. The implications of this are important and should not be overlooked.

6 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/downfall.mp3

7

ARRESTED BY NORMS

Helfenbein (2021) argues that spaces are imbued with possibility, including opportunities for resistance, resilience, and refusal of violent norms. The actions local actors choose from among these possibilities can assume multiple forms, with inaction sometimes speaking as loudly as action (Tuck & Wayne, 2014). Returning to my discussion of power in Chapter 1, although Foucault's (1978) assertion that there is no outside of power resonates strongly with students' experiences at Milford, they also consistently intra-acted with bodies in the school to construct new spaces of possibility. For example, as described in Chapter 4, girls of color often interacted with staff and peers in ways that abided white femininity to gain access to the underlife of the institution and enact agency to "be" in school. This chapter attends to the opposite side of that coin, the spaces where students of color felt particularly arrested by the power structures at play.

As described below, these are spaces and places throughout the school where whitestream norms and values were enforced more strongly. At times, like in the cafeteria, it might be argued that increased enforcement of norms, and therefore rules, is in direct correlation to safety and security. However, whether or not this is the case, here I attend to how enforcement of norms and values calls differences into greater relief, framing them as deficits while inscribing kids in increasingly tighter sociocultural double binds. As students of color exercise their available agency against these pressures, friction (Tsing, 2005) between marginalized students and the mainstream pushes at the cultural status quo. Such friction can have both positive and negative consequences. In this case, both kinds of consequences are explored.

This chapter briefly pulls locations and events away from the broader context of the school, falsely bracketing them for a moment. Students' narratives are included in the text alongside excerpts from auditory maps, allowing the reader to listen deeply (Oliveros, 2005) to these contexts before they are folded back

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245-8

into the polyvocal text that is schooling. The daily echo chambers of oppression that students experienced at Milford were complex webs that engendered and maintained violence in implicit and explicit ways. Although schools are always knotted across contexts, I set these aside momentarily to unpack individual events, hoping that we might better hear how assemblages of violence function at school as wholes by looking at some of their parts.

Art is for White People: Getting Noticed for Work

Sound File: Using the "N-word"[1]
Sound File: Art Is a Joy[2]

At a time when the state was cutting school funding at the expense of the arts, Milford High School still offered a variety of art classes, from drawing to pottery. Although the school managed to preserve the art department, budget cuts did decrease a host of other electives. This meant that, to fulfill elective requirements for graduation, most students eventually funneled through the art department at some point during their high school experience. Students' reactions to art classes varied widely, ranging between elation and exasperation. Those who enjoyed the classes often commented on how the courses offered a chance to express themselves beyond traditional academic coursework.

Every quarter, the art teachers changed the displays outside of their rooms to highlight the work they found exceptional. The year that this study was conducted, there were three pieces on which students commented (Figure 7.1). Each piece was produced by white students and depicted Black people, generally

FIGURE 7.1 Drawings and paintings displayed during the year outside the art classrooms. All three images are by white students.

represented with distressed expressions. During this school year, only white and Black people were represented in the hallway displays, creating an absence of all other races and ethnicities. Although any child should be able to draw a person of any race—conversely, for example, students of color should be able to depict white people—the issue here is that students of color complained that their art in general, and their self-representations specifically, were consistently not showcased in the school. This representational appropriation only reified where and when voices of color could be heard in the enacted and hidden curricula. For example, although Ambika, the Indian student whose voice was heard in the sound file "Art Is a Joy," articulated how much she loved the class, she was always disappointed when her work was not chosen for the hall, and similarly disappointed that it was not just her: No art of people who represented Indian culture were exhibited. The silenced voices and suffocated abilities of students of color in these cases resonate with Du Bois' (1926) argument in *Criteria of Negro Art*:

> Thus all Art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have for writing has been used always for propaganda for gaining the right of Black folk to love and enjoy. I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda. But I do care when propaganda is confined to one side while the other is stripped and silent.
>
> *(para 29)*

Tatum *and* Tasers?: Eating While Black

Sound File: Sitting in the Way Back[3]
Sound File: Cafeteria Trays[4]

Cafeteria cash registers popping open, and slamming shut. High-pitched beeping as students rapidly punch lunch codes into data pads. These sounds punctuate the hum of voices in the cafeteria. Across the five possible lunch periods, if there are more than three or four students of color, they tend to sit together in the back of the cafeteria, furthest from the registers but in a position that allows them to watch events unfold from a slight distance. During the year that I collected data for this study, there were two periods when the group of students of color was larger, totaling about seven students. During these periods, the cafeteria aides positioned themselves behind the table where the students of color sat rather than at the other end of the cafeteria, near the registers, where they usually stood.

Most participants in the study made negative comments about the cafeteria, except when it was considered Little Africa in the morning. Each had a story to share about how they had been marginalized by other students or staff during lunch. For example, one afternoon I was walking past the cafeteria when I noticed

Eli, a tall biracial male student, chest to chest with a similarly built white male student. Silence had fallen over nearby students, who watched in anticipation for a fight to break out. I walked up to the two and asked what had happened. "This fucker stole my chair, *again*! I'm sick of sharing a chair. I got here early. I got the chair. Fuck him! I'm sitting in my own chair today," Eli seethed. In the corner there was an extra seat that was not taken so I tapped them both on the shoulder to get their attention, walked over, got the chair, placed it by them, and said, "Ok! Problem solved! Enjoy!" Neither boy moved. I put my body partially between theirs, looked at Eli and said in a calm voice, "Come on, now . . . This is not worth a suspension. It's a chair. A damn chair. And now you've got one. Relax." His body relaxed slightly, and he sat down.

After talking with the other boys at the table I crossed to the four teachers whose duty is to monitor the cafeteria. They were standing on the edge of the room, looking dismayed. I asked them at what point they had planned to take any action or call for backup. One teacher, a thin, white woman in her early 20s, replied, "I don't know . . . I just don't know. They just frightened me, you know?" I made my way to the nearest administrative office and suggested that the following day an adult who felt comfortable intervening should stop by that area and make sure there were no problems. To be clear, I recognize the inherent tension in this action that might incidentally land a student in trouble if they were profiled as the "problem." I heavily weighed these considerations before I spoke to the administrator but ultimately knew that adult intervention might be necessary.

By the end of the day, students informed me that nearly every African American child at the table was issued some kind of punishment, and they were told they could no longer sit together. While I am unable to confirm their reports, several participants told me that the white students involved were not given any formal punishment and were permitted to sit together in the future. As I visited the cafeteria in the following weeks, I noticed that the students of color were dispersed, while the table with white students seemed to have the same arrangement. Eli later thanked me for preventing the fight, explaining that the white student regularly took a chair from their table and that he was thereby forced to share a seat with another student or that one of the students would have to sit elsewhere. That particular day, the white student had apparently called Eli the "N-word." Eli had reported it to the faculty in the room, but he was told to just "let it go." Eli explained that, by the moment I arrived, he just "wanted a chair," adding that he was "just done being bothered."

Another story, which ignited a shared sense of rage among students of color, occurred in the fall semester. It involved Damari, a transfer student who stood at over six foot and was more than 200 pounds. Students and staff openly remarked that they found him "frightening." He carried himself with a particular kind of confidence that bordered on resentment, a habit developed from, as he explained, being stared at constantly. I understood what he was referring to, as his size became

the topic of conversation from the first week he transferred into the school. He quickly became known as "disruptive" and "obstinate" among staff members, who frequently asked him to leave their classrooms for his behavior. For example, he was once told to get quiet when he excitedly exclaimed "There it is!" in math class when he finally understood how to solve a particular equation. In another incident, I ran into him as he was pacing the hall. He complained that he had been being kicked out of a class after arriving four minutes late and greeting the class with an exuberant "What's up, people!" The teacher was irritated at the disruption and told him to go back out and come back when he "knew how to enter a classroom correctly." He kept repeating that he was not sure how to act or how to be in a school where he was expected to remain silent, but his body garnered consistent attention. One afternoon, in complete frustration, he said, "They stare at me like a monkey in a damn zoo but expect me to be quiet like I don't exist. I can't do both."

A few weeks after that interview, Jahmir and Raquel sprinted into my room. Things had apparently come to a head and a fight had broken out in the cafeteria between Damari and a white male student, resulting in Damari's arrest and suspension. The following are interview excerpts about this event:

> Sound File: Fight[5]
> Sound File: Police Perspective[6]

Jahmir: Did you hear about Damari? Shit went down! This damn cracker . . . a little guy! He's been an ass to Damari and today he posted up and Damari lost it and bitch slapped 'em! Just like this! (Mimicking a punch in the air.)

Raquel: Yeah. He lost it, Woz! Next thing I know the police is on him. I think they tased him! That's what everyone else is saying too. He was down there (on the ground) strugglin'! Principals all around. Kids screaming like they never seen a fight and a boy get 'cuffed.

Jahmir: Yeah but the thing is, the other kid really started it. He's been an ass for weeks, calling [Damari] names. So he had it coming, you know? Can't fuck with an angry Black kid who doesn't know what to do around here.

In the weeks following the incident, students posted cell phone images to the school's Twitter account under the hashtag #WeRMilford, a hashtag created and encouraged by school officials earlier in the year to garner positive press about school events.[7] In the case of this fight, posted images, comments, and memes varied from discriminatory messages to students' reactions (Figures 7.2–7.3). In terms of the latter, some students, as the arresting officer, Officer Volk stated, were shocked to see violence in what they considered to be a peaceful, suburban school. Others were elated that a Black student was arrested in such a public

FIGURE 7.2 Images from the school's Twitter account related to Damari's arrest

FIGURE 7.3 Images from the school's Twitter account related to Damari's arrest

display. Still others were neutral about the incident but upset that it disrupted their day, as rumors about tasing became the predominant conversation in classes that afternoon. In contrast, many students of color began to protest Damari's suspension by writing "free Damari" on their fingers and arms. As can be heard in the sound clip "Fight," students were promptly asked by staff to remove these messages in support of Damari.

While students of color seemed to understand that Damari's decision to fight had serious consequences, they were upset that the boy who regularly antagonized him was only suspended for one day. Figure 7.4 shows posts expressing that the white student was "doing the right thing" and that he was a "role model" for fighting back. Students of color were further dismayed that, while white students

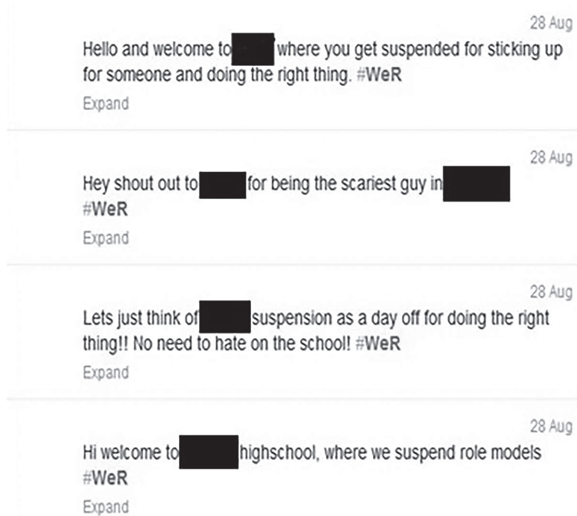


FIGURE 7.4 Comments from Twitter, referring to a white student's one-day suspension

could publicly applaud the white student's actions on social media, their silent protests were prohibited. Both students of color and their parents reported that they had contacted the school and asked for the photos to be removed from the account. The posts, however, remained unfiltered and, at the end of the academic year, were still publicly accessible.

In the wake of the fight, both boys and girls of color reported increased tensions and aggression from white peers while at school. I witnessed an immediate rise in the number of students who wanted to eat lunch in my classroom, fearing retaliation from peers who essentialized all students of color, blaming them for Damari's actions. Male students of color identified with the prejudicial treatment Damari received, articulating that any aggression or perception of violence would be disproportionately punished compared to similar behaviors in their white peers. In other words, students of color felt that if they engaged in a fight, especially after Damari's altercation, they would receive additional detentions or suspensions from administration to, as Andrew stated, "make a point about their place in the school." Before the fight, students of color either roamed the hall or milled about in Little Africa. Afterward, the group tightened down for a few weeks, standing at the end of the day with their backs to the wall and avoiding the cafeteria altogether during lunch.

In Beverly Tatum's (2003) seminal work, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race*, she discussed racially segregated groups in the cafeteria as safe spaces that act as a border. Tatum argues that this practice constructs a space where students of color can be themselves, temporarily relieved from everyday racisms that impact students' ways of being, knowing, and

doing. At Milford, the cafeteria during lunch was not considered a safe space and, unlike at breakfast, it was not regarded as an extension of "Little Africa." While Damari's actions intensified the apprehension that students of color felt about the cafeteria, as well as negative perception of African Americans by some white students, students of color had already often avoided the cafeteria during lunch before this event. Those who did sit in the cafeteria regularly explained that either they had no other place to go or they felt they should be able to use the space despite their encounters with emotional violence. As Troy articulated in the sound file "Cafeteria Trays," which opens this section, he endured a particular set of explicit pressures from staff members. However, as he explained, "I have a right to eat like any person, not like a nigger in some corner."

Eating in the cafeteria was therefore one way that students of color exercised agency to resist and refuse violent norms at school. Participants shared that eating in the cafeteria was intentional, a way of (re)claiming space in the school and a place that they regarded as safe in the morning but not throughout the day. Raquel explained that eating in the cafeteria was a way of "standing [their] ground" and reminding people that they had a "right to eat at the damn lunch counter, just like they did during Civil Rights." While Tatum (2003) asked about students sitting *together* in the cafeteria, here I have explored why students might *avoid* the cafeteria unless their presence is in protest of violent norms at the school. With one less place to "be," this surfaces the affective and material consequences of everyday racial profiling that occur while students try to take care of basic needs, like eating, in school.

Pushing Back: Finding Spaces in Academic Places

Audre Lorde (1984) writes that "places of possibility within ourselves are dark because they are ancient and hidden; they have survived and grown strong through that darkness" (p. 36). Similarly, McKittrick and Woods (2007) discuss the importance of "presenting communities that have struggled, resisted, and significantly contributed to the production of space" (p. 6). These authors call for a critical reflection on how people find ways to resist silencing by enacting various forms of agency and being heard. Where Lorde argues for spaces within poetry and finding a sense of self through ancient dialogues, McKittrick and Woods call for an attention to the stories that have impacted the creation and disruption of spaces.

Focusing on two places in Milford High—my classroom and the gymnasium—this section similarly attends to the ways students of color used their agency and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1993) to traverse the boundaries and borders of schooling, creating space for their ways of being in and against academic places. Through interviews, maps, and observations, I quickly learned that there were few places students regarded in the school as "safe" during academic instruction, and that these few areas were among the places most often marked by students of color as "safe." As explored here, these spaces of possibility were often

perceived as fleeting by students of color, or, as Kadence expressed, "the struggle bus to find a place to *be* and learn." This is not unlike Lorde's (1984) point about space where she argues that:

> Possibility is neither forever nor instant . . . We can sometimes work long and hard to establish one beachhead of real resistance to the deaths we are expected to live, only to have that beachhead assaulted or threatened by those canards we have been socialized to fear.
>
> *(p. 38)*

In this case, Lorde is speaking to the enactment of agency that is often quashed by the sociocultural expectations that cultivate fear and submission among local actors. This section also attends to what Kadence and other girls of color described as an academic "struggle bus," or the dual pressure to find or construct places to "be and learn" in places while overcoming personal anxiety and resisting everyday racisms.

Pushing Against Social Ontology: Hanging with Black Momma

> After the morning bell rings, I know it's only a matter of minutes before the first youth come to my room. Not students in my Spanish class, those who are required to attend. I'm talking about the students who have come to my room to, as they put it, "avoid the shit" of places like study hall or lunch. This year, I had an extra one to three additional students in my room nearly every period. Almost all of them were students of color or queer youth. The school allows teachers to have aides, so when students make the decision that they want their time in my room to be permanent, I have them formally assigned as a "student aide" for that period, meaning they became my legal responsibility during that time. When students knew I had a planning period or lunch, I would often have five or six students asking for passes to eat lunch in my room or avoid study hall. The only rule I explicitly set was that whatever students decided to do in my classroom, it had to be productive in a way that either helped themselves or others. Many students used the time as a study hall, working diligently on their own homework. Other times, they sat and quietly tutored each other. Sometimes, if they were an upper-level Spanish student, they would volunteer to tutor peers in the class who struggled with the course content.
>
> Sound File: Rapping[8]
> Sound File: Birthday[9]

To be clear, in the dynamics I describe above, students of color did not always stay on task. My classroom was not a magical place where everyone worked

quietly or collaboratively all of the time. They were almost always respectful of Spanish students, who were learning by remaining quiet during moments of direct instruction. Like any other teens, however, they did have the tendency to get off task during moments when Spanish students were working in small groups. Similar to students' behavior in Little Africa, when students diverged from their work, the classroom was filled with the sounds of laughter, music, and jesting conversation. These sounds—laughter and conversation—were like those in Little Africa when students were most relaxed and at home with community. In-group supervision meant that I rarely (about half a dozen times in a year) had to ask these students to lower their voices.

Over time I became aware that several of these student aides had begun to privately call me "Black Momma" among themselves. When I asked about this nickname, participants would chuckle nervously or say something like, "Well . . . you know. No one messes with Black Momma." This image of a maternal figure was often reinforced, as students would solicit my advice on relationships, jobs, or schoolwork. Although I appreciated that students sensed my presence as one that treated them with respect and dignity, I was acutely aware that my position as a woman of color who addressed equity issues fell under the trope of a "momma" rather than any other conceivable position at the intersection of authority and being female.

In one conversation with Sierra and Shay, I asked, "Why *Black* Momma? I am biracial, white and Southeast Asian." Sierra responded, "Well what else? You look after us and tell us when we've crossed the line. You give us snacks from your cabinet. What else is a Black momma?" I asked about her other teachers who are female that look after them. Sierra scoffed, folded her arms, and said, "What makes *you* think *they EVER* look after *us*?" I asked about female authority figures outside of school. Shay commented, "Pleeeaaaase! Outside we're either someone's baby or a nigga . . . Not much ground to stand on between those two."

On occasion, like a sibling tattling on a brother or sister, they would report issues within the group and ask me to mitigate the situation. For example, Marcus came to my room one day while Da'von waited in the hall. Marcus' voice was nearly frantic as he explained that Da'von, a generally passive student whose version of violence was always verbal and never physical, was going to "pop off on the next asshole cracker who pushes him around." He explained that he could not take him to the office for help because he knew that "Da'von would just get treated there." I smiled at Marcus and asked him how old he was. Marcus proudly explained he was seventeen. I asked, "And in seventeen years, you've never figured out how to calm down a friend? Don't you consider yourself a leader in this group? Do you really need me or are you just nervous to try?" He paused a moment and replied, "Just nervous, I guess." Over the next twenty minutes of their lunch and my planning period, they talked through the issue and resolved it without my help. Afterward, Marcus told me, "See . . . that's why we come to you."[10]

The time students spent in my room was in many ways an extension of the safe space provided by Little Africa, though it did not have the same history and it was bound by educational expectations. Students used their time in my room as a moment to relax and relate to each other in similar ways to their time in the hallway. However, because the place was appropriated by the school (and maintained by me) as an educational space, as are most classrooms in American public schools, the tenor of the space carried out by students was generally academic. While I will admit that "being with Black Momma" gave students a safe space and place for academic work, I am unable to know how much work students would have completed independently of my room and how much was contextually dependent.

Regardless of the dynamics inside my classroom, I always felt the tensions outside of it. In other words, despite any feelings I had about facilitating students' academic success and using my room as a protected place to engage students academically, I was aware that the same opportunities and access did not exist in other places. One afternoon, for example, I found myself in an informal conversation with an administrator and a few teachers about Matthew, a sophomore at the school. The teachers were complaining about Matthew's behavior in class, adding that he rarely completed his work or cared enough to study for tests. The administrator, trying to "play devil's advocate," explained:

> Matthew probably knows you have given up on him. You have to show him that you haven't. Let him know that you care. Take him as your project. And if that doesn't work . . . here are a stack of detention forms."

At the time, Matthew was working to make up several missed credits from previous years while catching up on missed work from a recent suspension. Although he worked diligently every day in my class during school hours, and occasionally after school, he often expressed feeling overwhelmed under a workload that seemed insurmountable. The administrator's actions paid lip service to equity but, as she handed over the detentions, she engaged in the hidden curricula that sought to control rather than support Matthew's potential.

Whether or not my classroom was available became almost irrelevant as Matthew struggled to overcome not only the circumstances that placed him in detentions and suspensions, but also broader deficit ideologies that were enforced and propagated by administration and staff. As scholars have widely described, marginalized student populations' differences are frequently viewed as deficits against more highly valued white, cishetero, English-speaking, patriarchal sociocultural norms. This deficit model positions students of color for failure within a sociopolitical system of schooling (Milner, 2008; Valencia, 2010). When a student's way of being cuts against several, if not all, of these valued cultural norms, systems of schooling are organized such that their being is perceived as a deficit and, often, a threat. As a consequence, essentialist views of difference contribute not only to

maintaining binaries of "success" and "failure" (Varenne & McDermott, 1998) but also to the social ontology (Mills, 1998) of broader ideas and ideals.

Additionally, the formal curriculum maintained the notable absence of people of color that compounded already explicit racialized sociocultural ideas and ideals about students of color. Without a historical base for understanding one's actions, comments like those made by teachers to or about Black and brown students, along with the representations of blackness by white students, continued unabated throughout the year and, as a result, the historical significance of these actions was notably absent from the school's collective memory. A salient example of such injustice was articulated by Sierra, who angrily explained that a teacher stopped her from reading a fiction novel during study hall and asked, "What are you doing?" She replied, "Reading." The teacher said in a sarcastic tone, "Oh . . . I didn't know you could do that." Sierra, who loved reading for pleasure, was so distraught that she stopped bringing books to study hall and later asked to be transferred to my room as an aide so she could read without fear of sarcastic comments. In a group interview with other girls of color she relayed the story again and the other girls narrated similar stories. Finally, Shyanne asked, "Is it because we're girls or Black? What makes *us* so stupid to *them*?" In a subsequent interview with mixed genders, Troy said, "It's not just the girls. We're all stupid niggers to them. Just for some reason they feel they have to tell the girls out loud, like they need reminded and we should already know."

Given that academic performance can function like cultural capital, girls of color frequently expressed their frustrations with the disjuncture between academic expectations and racialized understandings of their ways of knowing. This double bind was previously discussed in terms of students' athletic ability, particularly for young men of color, who used their cultural capital to move more freely within the building and the spaces near Little Africa. Students of color also noted that athletic capital pushed at teachers' and administrations' underlying understandings of people of color, creating a space where they were considered "different from the thugs" under the image of the jock rather than the burnout (Eckert, 1989). However, athletic girls of color noted that expectations for them often emphasized academics over athletics, while boys of color described "just trying to pass the class to stay on the field." In subsequent interviews with white students, this privileging of athletics above academics also existed for young white men, while the inverse of either an expectation to be successful at both or a focus on academics existed for girls, regardless of race. However, all students of color agreed that academic success was more accessible for girls than boys, even though the explicit teacher dialogue about the possibility of academic failure and inadequacy was more often communicated to girls.

Recalling the discussion on "whiteness as property" in Chapter 3, girls expressed that if they "acted more white," they were given more chances at success and felt that they were not as frequently overlooked by staff. They reported receiving more respect and affirming attention from teachers when they used less

Black Vernacular, acted "on their best behavior," and worked not to joke or laugh loudly with friends during class. As Raquel noted,

> If you wanna get an A, all you gotta do is be white. If you can't be white, all ya gotta do is act white. Don't act like you at home, with your friends. If white kids are joking in class, even if the teacher is not teachin' and everyone is talkin', keep yo damn mouth shut! Act proper. [Straightens herself up and pulls her hair back into a bun.] "Yes, ma'am." '"Excuse me, sir." "Could you please explain?" None of this "I don't get it," dumb nigga stuff.

As girls of color discussed the benefits of "acting white" in academic settings, it seemed that even the best "white act" fell short in moments that the girls' differences were the overarching deficits by which they were measured.

For the students of color in this school, if they were acting or learning "appropriately" in my classroom, they became the exception to the rule within sociocultural expectations of their deficits. If they were acting "too Black" or failing at academics, they reinforced the rule. As heard in the sound clips "Good Behavior"[11] and "Expectations of Blackness"[12] from previous chapters, students of color were acutely aware of how their ways of being were folded into staff and administrative perceptions of their differences. In my classroom, their actions became inconsequential within a system designed to make their failures a biproduct of continually demonstrating the superiority of whitestream students (Varenne & McDermott, 1998).

This is not to say that their efforts did not matter. Indeed, it is exceptionally important that students not only had an academic safe space but also worked in ways that they found meaningful. Nonetheless, their efforts were overlooked or deemed irrelevant against broader sociocultural precepts. This is a modern instantiation of Woodson's (1933) classic discussion that articulates the how African American students' differences are perceived as a "curse" (p. 3), as well as of Cooper's (1892) writing about the "fast bound clamps of ignorance or inaction" (p. 56) that bind women to be subservient to white men. Simply put, what does it mean when students of color in a contemporary school face the same ontological ceilings, the same agentic contingencies, that African American scholars identified and argued against over 100 years ago?

Pushing Back: Social/Physical Movement and Sounding Black

Sound File: Reindeer Games[13]
Sound File: Parts of the Gym[14]

During their cartographic trips over the course of the academic year, nearly all participants mapped the gym, often with greater detail compared to other areas either drawn in visual representations or discussed in auditory maps (Figure 7.5).

Students often drew other places with little detail, at most labeling the location. When they drew the gym, they would often draw the basketball courts or label the locker rooms. During auditory mapping sessions, students would often stop by the gym more than once or walk through the space noting the features as they passed (bleachers, court, etc.).

As heard on both sound files above, which were collected during the first semester of the academic year, several students of color shared the same physical education class. Because I taught during this class period, I was unable to watch the students' interactions and instead had to rely on participant interviews and maps rather than my own observations. Regardless of race, gender, ability, or sexual orientation, students of color spoke positively about physical education class.

Many noted that this was because of the comparatively larger number of students of color in each class. More specifically, students shared that they enjoyed being able to pick the music played in class and, as Shyanne noted, students could "shake it like Beyoncé . . . between having dodge balls thrown at [them] and shooting hoops."

Students did mention negative interactions with other students. They explained that these moments often went unchecked by teachers because of the sheer size of the gym. This meant that racist exchanges easily occurred in the absence of supervision in the locker room or in moments where the echoes of basketballs shielded hostile words. However, all students were clear that when physical education teachers heard these remarks, they were dealt with swiftly and in ways that made students of color feel they had received justice. From this perspective, students of color enjoyed the gym and felt they could be more themselves there. They also noted that this sense of relief was often tempered by their peers' ability to be racist in spite of their teachers' appropriate responses.

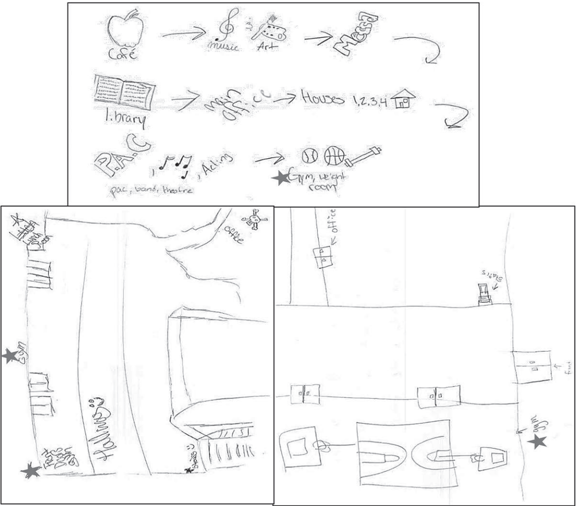


FIGURE 7.5 Students' maps with stars placed by the gym

The gym was therefore a markedly safer space but not truly a safe space (Goffman, 1961) for students of color.

The most divergent part of the auditory maps collected was in how students of color approached mapping the gym. In particular, students of color who were athletes mapped the gym by entering the space ("parts of the gym") while those who were not talked about the gym from the hallway ("reindeer games"). This was the case regardless of gender, but girls who entered the gym did so in groups rather than on their own, while boys of color were not shy about entering alone. These recursive patterns relate to the discussion in Chapter 3 about cultural capital, capitals of shame, athletics, and gender disparities. As aforementioned, young men of color who were athletes were able to move about more freely between the hallway and the gym at the end of the day, using both places and spaces as they preferred. Girls of color, while given more cultural capital for their participation in athletics, were still marginalized by gender not only within the school underlife but also within the broader sociocultural structures.

Similarly, in their mapping, female athletes entered the gym but with the companionship of other female athletes, and male athletes of color came and left the gym as they pleased. Students of color who did not participate in athletics, regardless of gender, talked about enjoying physical education class without entering the physical place to map it. White students who participated also commented on the gym but, regardless of their athletic status, all white students mapped the gym by going inside, as can be heard in Bethany's map.

Sound File: Nonstrict Class[15]

Although students of color were clear that gym provided a particular relief in their schedule, a moment to move as themselves, their performances of blackness (Goffman, 1959) were not lost, as in this movement they received pushback from their white peers. Despite the freedoms of the place, such as the agency to choose music and, if athletic in ability, the capacity to move in and through gym spaces, students of color were still constrained by sociocultural borders and boundaries. They were, as Hudson (2007) argues,

> Negotiating the heavily layered texts of race and racism that define the spaces of Blackness even before Black space [could] exist, especially in those contexts where Blackness is marginal . . . [particularly within] a certain critical value in understanding Blackness as always foreign to any place.
>
> *(p. 172)*

Conclusion

At Milford, trajectories of failure shuttled across the forms of curriculum—formal, enacted, hidden, and null—in ways that not only normalized failure, but

constructed a space where it became an expected outcome for students of color. To educational theorists, this perhaps comes as no surprise. Educational research has consistently shown that Black and brown students' needs are not only not met but are often ignored in schools (e.g., Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Rodriguez et al., 2016; Watkins, 2001). In the absence of systemic care and attention toward their emotional, academic, and physical needs, these students face a multiplicity of forms of violence in school (Castagno, 2014; Love, 2019). If schools are echo chambers of oppression for marginalized youth, the waves of violence that are heard and felt in them are therefore iterations of the curriculum that constantly crashes against students' ways of being, knowing, and doing.

As curriculum continues to be set up to facilitate whiteness (Fanon, 1963; Matias, 2016; Nespor, 1997; Watkins, 2001), these unabated forms of violence will keep funneling students of color toward self-fulfilling prophecies of failure across educational assemblages. Although such failure disproportionately impacts Black and brown students, the collective memory formed and informed within educational assemblages is harmful to all students. For example, learning racialized messages across the forms of curriculum not only impacted students of color but resonated in ways that served to strengthen white privilege and, in some cases, feelings of white supremacy for some students. In some spaces and places within the school, like the art rooms and the cafeteria, the conditions under which students were socioculturally outcast made it difficult for them to simply be themselves or take care of their basic needs, like eating. In places that offered a brief respite from sociocultural discrimination, like my classroom or the gym, the capacity for students of color to demonstrate their abilities outside such prophecies were inconsequential to shifting the broader social ontologies (Mills, 1998) that predetermined their ways of being and knowing. Their successes were consistently recast as failures.

Similar to Doreen Massey's (2005) discussion on the complex interactions that construct spheres of possibility, where she notes "without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space" (p. 9), I argue that the four forms of curriculum create a multiplicity or assemblage of oppressions, constructing violence spaces that engender failure at school. These oppressions are intra-actions that shape sociopolitical and cultural memory. The curricula are heard here through students' narratives as waves of oppression, resounding within the echo chambers of school and shaping how people and groups are re-membered. Take the example of the required reading of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in Language Arts classes. Presented as part of a canon of "classic" work, Twain's text is rarely, if ever, presented with counternarratives. These absent texts, like Toni Morrison's (1991) *Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination* or other books, articles, or excerpts, could help students unpack the many ways that whiteness is presented and normalized through schooling. But as a result of their exclusion, the formal curriculum presents a singular, reified lens of subjugation for people of color. The silenced voices and narratives

(Weis, 1993) that become the null curriculum further buttress the violence across hidden and enacted curricula.

These curricula enact the "choking away," as Du Bois (1903) wrote, of the ways of being and knowing of students of color at Milford. While students certainly exercised agency in particular places, as discussed throughout these chapters, their ontologies and epistemologies were suffocated in the broader context of the school. Further, in spaces and places where their presence was considered a nuisance (Woodson, 1933), their ways of being were, at best, devalued, and at worst, as in the case of the cafeteria, considered a "problem" (Du Bois, 1903). Despite the fact that this "problem" was often a product of peer and faculty bullying, students of color frequently removed themselves by finding other places to be than in class, stayed in silent protest of sociocultural conditions, or were forcibly removed from class or the school.

Agency is always already complex. Advocating to become a student aide or remaining silent are both important ways that students enacted agency. As students intersected and crashed against the agentic contingencies maintained through assemblages of schooling, any wiggle room within the system was a tool for onto-epistemological survival. The ways students might enact agency were often passed down across generations as students intra-acted within places like Little Africa, the school, and the broader community. Although my room served as a safe space, such places in schools are rarely permanent. After I retired from teaching in K–12 schools, students from this study reported finding other available safe places to be in school. Much like the way sound travels through and around obstacles, students enacted agency despite the barriers and borders presented in school. While limiting factors might have mitigated this enactment, like sound crashing on certain materials, this does not make the decision to enact agency any less significant. Even in silence, there is movement.

Closing Vignette: Oppressive Silence

> It's spring. The afternoon is warm but there is a cool breeze drifting through the trees. I went outside to get some fresh air, to get away from the pressure of a colleague calling me a "spic" through a half joke and jeering smile. It was quiet outside as I sat on the bench. My lungs were half filled when around the corner came Officer Volk with a young African American man, handcuffed. A police SUV pulled up and the boy was placed in the back of the vehicle. The two officers quietly exchanged a few words as the boy sat in the back seat.
>
> The silence struck me. Unlike Damari's arrest earlier in the year, this was quiet, with no one but me and the two officers to bear witness. I had no idea who the boy was or what he had done. He did not resist, but just sat there, looking like a stunned child. Still, it was silent. Even as the car pulled away.

Not long after, there was another fight and another African American boy was arrested. It was after school and the administrators worked hard to keep the crowds at bay, tension rising as children and adults peered over from the car pick-up lane. When the boy's mother came, she got into a verbal dispute with an administrator, who said in frustration, "Your son cannot act this way here! This is Milford, not the ghetto!"

The mother reeled back, her face contorting with the same stunned expression as the boy from a few days earlier. It was a face of hurt and disgust, but she soon ended the argument and headed toward her car. For a moment, the place was silent. As before, the breeze flowed gently as the cars pulled away. Nothing was left but the impression of oppression on the silent faces of the children nearby.

Notes

1 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/N-Word.mp3
2 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/art.mp3
3 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Way-Back.mp3
4 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Cafeteria-Trays.mp3
5 To hear this file, to go: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/fight.mp3
6 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/police-perspective.mp3
7 Like all social media, there were a range of topics reported on this page. Unfortunately, the district did not have a social media specialist at the time, which meant that tweets under the hashtag ranged from images of athletes competing to moldy food under cafeteria tables.
8 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/rapping.mp3
9 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/birthday.mp3
10 To be clear, I am not relaying these events to be self-aggrandizing or to lean into the highly problematic "savior complex" that plagues the teaching profession (Aronson, 2017). The intersection of my biracial identity and the dearth of other faculty of color in the district meant that students of color were generally eager to relate to me, as with any adult of color at school. This meant that I sometimes offered gentle corrections to their conflated understandings of race while trying to honor their need to connect with marginalized adults that broadly shared the category of being a racial minority, despite the clear differences in our heritages.
11 To review this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/good-behavior.mp3
12 To review this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/expectations-of-blackness.mp3
13 To listen to this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/games.mp3

14 To listen to this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/gym.mp3
15 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/non-strict-class.mp3

Bibliography

Ahmed, S. (2010). Happy objects. In M. Gregg & G. J. Seigworth (Eds.), *The affect theory reader* (pp. 29–51). Duke University Press.

Ally, B. A., Hussey, E. P., & Donahue, M. J. (2013). A case of hyperthymesia: Rethinking the role of the amygdala in autobiographical memory. *Neurocase*, *19*(2), 166–181.

Amos, Y. T. (2018). *Latina bilingual education teachers: Examining structural racism in schools*. Routledge.

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.

Aronson, B. A. (2017). The white savior industrial complex: A cultural studies analysis of a teacher educator, savior film, and future teachers. *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis*, *6*(3), 35–64.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. Trans. C. Emerson & M. Holquist. University of Texas Press.

Baldwin, J. (1963). A talk to teachers. *The Saturday Review,* 42–44.

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.

Bethune, M. M. (1938). Clarifying our vision with the facts. *Journal of Negro History,* 7(2), 10–15.

Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural production*. Polity Press.

Bresler, L. (Ed.). (2013). *Knowing bodies, moving minds: Towards embodied teaching and learning*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Browne, S. (2015). *Dark matters: On the surveillance of blackness*. Duke University Press.

Castagno, A. E. (2014). *Educated in whiteness: Good intentions and diversity in schools*. University of Minnesota Press.

Castiglia, C., & Reed, C. (2012). *If memory serves: Gay men, AIDS, and the promise of the queer past*. University of Minnesota Press.

Cooper, A. J. (1892). *A voice from the South, by a Black woman from the South*. University of North Carolina Press.

Crenshaw, C. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity, and violence against women of color, *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241–1300.

Davis, L. J. (Ed.). (2016). *The disability studies reader*. Routledge.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus.* Trans. Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press.

Delpit, L. (2005). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. The New Press.

Dewey, J., & Bentley, A. (1949). *Knowing and the known*. Beacon Press.

Dillard, C. B. (2021). *The spirit of our work: Black women teachers (re)member.* Beacon Press.

Dixon-Román, E. J. (2017). *Inheriting possibility: Social reproduction and quantification in education*. University of Minnesota Press.

Doane, A. W., & Bonilla-Silva, E. (Eds.). (2003). *White out: The continuing significance of racism*. Psychology Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of Black folk*. McClurgand.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1926). Criteria of Negro art. *The Crisis, 32,* 290–297.

Eckert, P. (1989). *Jocks and burnouts: Social categories and identity in the high school*. Teachers College Press.

Eisner, E. (1985). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs.* Macmillan.

Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth*. Grove/Atlantic, Inc.

Flint, M. A. (2018). Cartographies of memory and affect: Nomadic subjectivities. *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal*, *3*(2), 6–19.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: The will to knowledge*. Penguin.

Freeman, V. (2010). "Toronto has no history!" Indigeneity, settler colonialism, and historical memory in Canada's largest city. *Urban History Review*, *38*(2), 21–35.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretations of cultures*. Basic Books.

Gershon, W. S. (2013). Resonance, affect, and ways of being: Implications of sensual curriculum for educational theory and urban first graders' literacy practices. *The Journal of School and Society*, *1*(1), 4–26.

Giroux, H., & Penna, A. (Eds.). (1983). *The hidden curriculum and moral education*. McCutchan.

Glissant, É. (1997). *Poetics of relation*. University of Michigan Press.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life.* Anchor Books.

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates.* Doubleday.

Halbwachs, M. (2020). *On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press.

Hall, S. (1996). *Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies*. Routledge.

Helfenbein, R. J. (2021). *Critical geographies of education: Space, place, and curriculum inquiry.* Routledge.

Hudson, P.J. (2007). The lost tribe of a lost tribe. In K. McKittrick & C. Woods (Eds.), *Black geographies and the politics of place* (pp.163–172). South End Press.

Jackson, P. W. (1968). *Life in classrooms.* Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Johnson, M. (1989). Embodied knowledge. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *19*(4), 361–377.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2006). Critical ontology and indigenous ways of being: Forging a postcolonial curriculum. In Y. Kanu (Ed.), *Integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the school curriculum: Purposes, possibilities, and challenges* (pp. 181–202). University of Toronto Press.

Kliebard, H. M. (1987/2004). *The struggle for the American curriculum: 1893–1958.* Routledge.

Lather, P. (2017). *(Post) critical methodologies: The science possible after the critiques: The selected works of Patti Lather*. Routledge.

Laura, C. T. (2014). *Being bad: My baby brother and the school-to-prison pipeline*. Teachers College Press.

Levine, L. J., & Safer, M. A. (2002). Sources of bias in memory for emotions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *11*(5), 169–173.

Lindsey, R. B., Karns, M. S., Karns, M., & Myatt, K. (2010). *Culturally proficient education: An asset-based response to conditions of poverty*. Corwin Press.

Lorde, A. (1984). *Outsider sister: Essays & speeches by Audre Lorde.* Crossing Press.

Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Beacon Press.

Lynn, M., & Dixson, A. D. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of critical race theory in education*. Routledge.

Malewski, E. (Ed.). (2009). *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment*. Routledge.

Massey, D. (2005). *For space*. Sage.

Matias, C. E. (2016). *Feeling white: Whiteness, emotionality, and education*. Brill.

McKittrick, K. (2021). *Dear science and other stories*. Duke University Press.

McKittrick, K., & Woods, C. (Eds.). (2007). *Black geographies and the politics of place*. South End Press.

Metz, M. H. (1978). *Classrooms and corridors: The crisis of authority in desegregated secondary schools.* University of California Press.

Mills, C. W. (1998). *Blackness visible: Essays on philosophy and race.* Cornell University Press.

Milner, H. R. (2008). Disrupting deficit notions of difference: Counter-narratives of teachers and community in urban education, *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(3), 1573–1598.

Mitchell, K. (2011). *Living with lynching: African American lynching plays, performance, and citizenship 1890–1930.* University of Illinois Press.

Morrison, T. (1991). *Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination.* Vintage.

Moscovitch, M., Cabeza, R., Winocur, G., & Nadel, L. (2016). Episodic memory and beyond: The hippocampus and neocortex in transformation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *67*, 105–134.

Nespor, J. (1997). *Tangled up in school: Politics, space, bodies and signs in the educational process.* Lawrence Erlbaum.

Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality.* Yale.

O'Connell-Rodwell, C. E. (2007). Keeping an "ear" to the ground: Seismic communication in elephants. *Physiology, 22*, 287–294.

Oliveros, P. (2005). *Deep listening: A composer's sound practice*. IUniverse.

Page, R. (2006). Curriculum matters. In D. T. Hansen (Ed.), *John Dewey and our educational perspective: A critical engagement with Dewey's democracy and education* (pp. 39–66). University of New York Press.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, *41*(3), 93–97.

Patihis, L., Frenda, S. J., & Loftus, E. F. (2018). False memory tasks do not reliably predict other false memories. *Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, and Practice*, *5*(2), 140–160.

Pinar, W. F. (Ed.). (2012). *Queer theory in education*. Routledge.

Pinar, W. F., Reynolds, R., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. (Eds.). (1995). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses.* Peter Lang.

Quinn, T., & Meiners, E. R. (2009). *Flaunt it!: Queers organizing for public education and justice*. Peter Lang.

Rist, R. (1973). *The urban school: A factory for failure.* MIT Press.

Rodriguez, N. M., Martino, W. J., Ingrey, J. C., & Brockenbrough, E. (2016). *Critical concepts in queer studies and education*. Palgrave.

Rosaldo, R. (1993). *Culture & truth: The remaking of social analysis.* Beacon Press.

Rosiek, J. L., Snyder, J., & Pratt, S. L. (2020). The new materialisms and Indigenous theories of non-human agency: Making the case for respectful anti-colonial engagement. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *26*(3–4), 331–346.

Sabzalian, L. (2019). *Indigenous children's survivance in public schools*. Routledge.

Schwab, J. J. (1969). The practical: A language for curriculum. *The School Review, 78*(1), 1–24.

Simpson, L. B. (2014). Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 3*, 1–25.

Smith, L. T., Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (Eds.). (2019). *Indigenous and decolonizing studies in education: Mapping the long view*. Routledge.

Spencer, H. (1859). What knowledge is of most worth? *The Westminster Review, 16*.

Staresina, B. P., & Wimber, M. (2019). A neural chronometry of memory recall. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *23*(12), 1071–1085.

Stein, S., Andreotti, V., Suša, R., Amsler, S., Hunt, D., Ahenakew, C., Elwood, J., Cajkova, T., Valley, W., Cardoso, C., Siwek, D., Pitaguary, B., D'Emilia, D., Pataxó, U., Calhoun, B. & Okano, H. (2020). Gesturing towards decolonial futures: Reflections on our learnings thus far. *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education (NJCIE)*, *4*(1), 43–65.

Stewart, K. (2007). *Ordinary affects.* Duke University Press.

Schwab, J. J. (1969). The practical: A language for curriculum. *The School Review, 78*(1), 1–24.

Tatum, B. D. (2003). "*Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?": And other conversations about race.* Basic Books.

Tsing, A. L. (2005). *Friction: An ethnography on global connection*. Princeton University Press.

Tuck, E., & Wayne Yang, K. (Eds.). (2014). *Youth resistance research and theories of change.* Taylor & Francis.

Urrieta, L. (2009). *Working from within: Chicana and Chicano activist educators in whitestream schools*. University of Arizona Press.

Valencia, R. R. (Ed.). (2010). *Dismantling contemporary deficit thinking: Educational thought and practices.* Routledge.

Varenne, H., & McDermott, R. (1998). *Successful failure: The school America builds.* Westview.

Watkins, W. H. (2001). *The white architects of black education: Ideology and power in America 1865–1954.* Teachers College Press.

Weis, L. (1993). *Beyond silenced voices: Class, race, and gender in United States schools*. SUNY Press.

Winfield, A. G. (2007). *Eugenics and education in America: Institutionalized racism and the implications of history, ideology, and memory*. Peter Lang.

Woodson, C. G. (1933). *The mis-education of the negro.* Tribeca Press.

Wozolek, B. (2021). *Assemblages of violence in education: Everyday trajectories of oppression*. Routledge.

8

FIELDS, SHAME, AND SCHOOLING

It is difficult for students to resist or refuse everyday oppression in schools. At Milford, as in many schools across the United States (Jackson, 1968; Sabzalian, 2019), students used the underlife of the institution (Goffman, 1961) to exercise agency within and across the contexts of schooling. As I have noted throughout this book, agency in schools is emergent and coconstituted when bodies intra-act within events (Barad, 2007). However, the emergent nature of agency does not exclude it from systems of power. Students therefore had to find the limits and possibilities of their agency as it emerged across all forms of curriculum. The layers of curricular violence that intra-acted with students' ontoepistemologies at Milford functioned like an echo chamber of oppression that they negotiated daily. Yet, as heard in the narratives of The Crew and other groups that found refuge in places like Little Africa, agency, and any enactment of it, mattered as students found wiggle room in the underlife to "be" against sociopolitical ideas and ideals of race, genders, and sexual orientations.

This chapter considers the conditions under which students of color became educationally choked and lynched at school. These necropolitical norms pervaded the underlife of the institution as it was entangled with broader sociopolitical and cultural values. To be clear, attending to educational necropolitics does not nullify student agency. Instead, this chapter re-turns to African American intellectual traditions that have long been clear about the relationship between schools and communities, considering Milford High as a contemporary example of how educational necropolitics are enacted, engendered, and maintained through systems of schooling.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245-9

Being and Beginning with History, the Curricula, and Corridors

As I write this, critical race theory is under attack across the United States, to the point that conservative groups host web pages identifying scholars who engage critically with race. Black people continue to be maimed and killed by police and private citizens. Undocumented people live in a perpetual state of fear. The abduction of Indigenous women continues to go largely ignored. And a host of other forms of violence remain normalized.

The violence that people of color experience in their communities is mirrored by a multiplicity of violences that students of color experience across curricular forms in school. Scholars across African American intellectual traditions are clear that when curricular assemblages of racism are maintained through schooling, physical and emotional violence toward people of color is overlooked across community spaces or, worse, encouraged (e.g., Bethune, 1938; Cooper, 1892; Locke, 1935; Woodson, 1933). Because injustices continued unabated in classrooms, the cultural acceptance of physical violence, discrimination, and marginalization thrives across the United States. To describe oppression and violence through schooling, African American scholars have used words like ridicule (Cooper, 1892), choking (Du Bois, 1926), and lynching (Woodson, 1933). These metaphors attend to ontoepistemological violence and death and describe the iterative and recursive intra-actions of violence between schools and communities. I use this imagery to argue that racialized curricula and daily experiences with marginalization impact communities across racial identities, entangling local actors within webs of violence.

Racialized and gendered understandings reified through the curricula permeated all aspects of everyday life for students of color at Milford. Whether through an administrator distinguishing appropriate from "ghetto" behavior, teachers referencing students through the "N-word," or white students categorizing their peers of color as the "Downfall of the World,"[1] differences cast as deficits were normalized and pervasive throughout the school. Through the difference-as-deficit model, dominant groups garnered a success that was predicated on the failure of marginalized students and communities. At Milford, this "failure" was defined in ways that especially positioned girls of color in a double bind, leaving their agency and ontoepistemologies trapped by racial bias on one hand and gender bias on the other.

When students of color were simply being themselves without intentionally subverting the system (something common among all adolescents), they were often understood by peers, teachers, and administrators as acting inappropriately according to sociocultural norms at the school. A few examples from previous chapters are John's decision to hug a white girl in the hallway after school or Raquel's "acting out" by stating her opinion in ways that undercut expectations of white femininity and voice. The students' decisions to "be" in the face of such

norms positioned them as failures, especially in the perception of the administration and staff, and often resulted in punitive measures.

In general, students' actions tend to be viewed through rather simplistic frames that alleviate or remove the responsibility of teachers and administrators surrounding events that occur at school. This is not to say that teachers are responsible for every action and intra-action; this is the kind of neoliberal idea that has led to merit pay based on standardized testing outcomes. Rather, I am attending to the ways that teachers and administrators are active curricular participants. Agency, actions, and sociopolitical norms are entangled with and coconstituted through all bodies present (and those absent) from classrooms and corridors.

At Milford High, teachers and administrators frequently used the discipline ladder as the primary mode of social and academic ascension or descension for students of color, presented in exactly that binary. In contrast, faculty tended to use other measurements when discussing academic or social success or failure for white students, such as academic performance or participation in extracurricular activities. However, rather than a binary "success or failure," teachers often described white students' desire to succeed as a "journey" that they undertook while at school. Although not the focus of this study, I did note that economically disenfranchised white students were generally positioned under the same "success/failure" binary as Black and brown students. Presented as a binary, success and failure were discussed as "choices." For example, one teacher noted that Damari "chose to fight the boy during lunch rather than ignore him." She added that if he would just "learn to control himself and not be bothered by a little teasing, perhaps he could make different choices."

The discipline ladder was often presented as linear and sequential, especially by administration who described it as a process of ascent—the "top" being detention, suspension, or arrest. During this study, students went "up" the ladder, but I was unaware of any that were able to go back "down." It was therefore also unidirectional. The process of going "up" the ladder determined the next "step" or "further action" for students who engaged in "bad choices." Steps along the discipline ladder ranged from verbal warnings to detentions or suspensions, depending on "where the student fit according to their individual history of choices," according to three administrators interviewed during the study. These "discipline-worthy actions" were often the ways of being, knowing, and doing that fell outside of "acceptable" behavior as predetermined by white cisheteropatriarchal ideas and ideals that pervaded school values (Alonso, 2009).

As youth climbed the rungs of the discipline ladder, it often resulted in a "more consequential identification" of their ways of being (Varenne & McDermott, 1998, p. 5). For example, if a student acted in a way that was considered unacceptable in terms of sociocultural norms, like greeting the class loudly, they began moving up the discipline ladder. Eventually their acts were viewed as "trouble," and the student would be pathologized as belonging to a high-risk behavioral group. Though many students of color were intentional in the ways that they

acted and reacted at various moments, moving up the discipline ladder marked them as a "problem" and positioned their very presence as a "curse" (Woodson, 1933, p. 8) in school. As Kyle articulated about others' reactions to him, "[they act] like doom's coming."

Administrators and teachers described the concept of a discipline ladder as a sorting mechanism for "good" and "bad" behaviors. These adults explained that students, and in particular students of color, could either escalate or reduce punishment by simply learning how to "act appropriately." However, the discipline ladder at Milford, like at many schools, served as a funnel for the school-to-prison pipeline or as a way to push Black and brown youth out of schools (Laura, 2014; Morris, 2016). In Matthew's case, when he felt that teachers did not care about him, he started disrupting class. These disruptions moved him quickly up the discipline ladder. As he moved up, he explained feeling "useless and unwanted." In response, he acted out more, doing things like cutting class. His actions eventually became severe enough that he started being suspended and, toward the end of the year, he spent a few days in juvenile detention. Scholars have argued that the school-to-prison pipeline uses existing inequities in schools, based on factors such as race and class, to begin a process that will increase the chances that students of color will be incarcerated in the future (Christle et al., 2005; Fasching-Varner et al., 2014). Because the discipline ladder often penalized students of color for ways of being that were antithetical to white expectations, they were far more likely to climb the ladder quickly and remain at higher levels, where punitive actions were more severe than those doled out to their white peers.

John's situation, where he hugged a white female student, presents another example of this movement from a school's discipline ladder to juvenile detention. As John and other students reflected on the incident, they argued that the punishment he received (expulsion) was due to his race. Specifically, they argued that race shaped the framing of the incident as sexual assault and, should a similar situation have occurred between two white students, that it might have been read as flirting gone awry. Rynnelle, for example, remarked that she had witnessed plenty of "white boys hug white girls who clearly were not into it but they didn't seem to be expelled." To be clear, I do not mean that "boys will be boys," excusing sexual violence, or to negate girls' rights to control their own bodies. In fact, I believe strongly that schools should embed questions of consent across the curriculum for all students, starting in preschool. But it remains important to attend to how race and gender intersect with discipline, something that disproportionately impacted Black boys at Milford.

Administrators explained that John's expulsion was not only the result of his decision to hug another student but, rather, that it was "aligned with other problems he created for himself." Other students also noted that John had what Demarcus called a "long rap sheet," including offenses like skipping class, stealing French fries from the cafeteria, and being too demanding when asking a teacher for spare lunch money. The list did not include any violent acts, sexual or otherwise, against

other students. As a result of his punishment, John's worried that his next "mistake interacting with white girls" would position him for juvenile detention.

Scholars have long argued that there are several underlying reasons that Black youth across genders are more likely to be channeled into the school-to-prison pipeline than their white peers (Winn & Behizadeh, 2011). As Crenshaw, Ocen, and Nanda (2012) note, young women of color are far more likely than other students to be surveilled and to receive "gendered consequences of disciplinary and push-out policies" (p. 5). They continue by explicating that the punishments these girls receive are for far-less serious infractions than not only their white female peers but also their male peers of color.

These and other such arguments are congruent with my observations at Milford. Boys were more likely enact behaviors that might place them on the discipline ladder that girls. However, young women of color were more susceptible to receiving disciplinary consequences for infractions centered on ways of being that fell outside white, feminine ideals. To be clear, young men of color were not somehow missed; they certainly faced retribution for behavior that was not considered acceptable per white norms and values, like Damari receiving punishment for loudly greeting the class even as his white peers were also engaged in conversation, as class had not yet formally begun. Black and brown girls, however, were not only punished for similar actions as their male counterparts, like "being too loud" (Lei, 2003), but faced additional punishments for any actions that stepped outside white feminine norms. This included anything from racist ideas around Black hair (Hines-Datiri & Carter Andrews, 2020; Morris, 2016) to the exoticization and sexualization of Black girls' bodies (Annamma et al., 2019), such as when girls were accused of wearing the "wrong pants" despite the fact that their white peers were wearing the exact same style of form-fitting leggings.

Male students of color would get in trouble for "acting Black" or engaging in a particular performativity of blackness, as when the boys in Little Africa frightened white freshmen with the "angry Black man" stereotype. Boys of color would get upset because white students were able to "act Black" without consequence, using the "N-word" or Black vernacular in public venues like the morning announcements. However, when young men of color acted in the same way, their actions were perceived negatively, and they potentially faced punitive measures. Young women of color also got in trouble for acting Black but, significantly, they got in trouble for simply being Black, having bodies outside of white beauty standards. Their bodies would be exoticized in yoga or pajama pants and punished for it. However, boys of color, who often sagged their pants, were not once pulled aside or sent to the office for their wardrobe choices during the year of my study, according to participants. Girls of color were therefore not only more constrained in their actions, but also became shackled by their bodies and their ways of being that were impossible to change. For example, the differences between African American or Latina and white hair were noted by white students and, even after

relaxing their hair, girls of color across racial identities noted that both white students and teachers touched their hair to "see what it feels like."

Writing about the oppression of Black peoples in a way similar to Fanon's (1961) discussion of colonized intellectuals, Woodson (1933) notes that, "if you control a man's [*sic*] thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions . . . He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it" (p. 5). While much attention has been paid to the ways that the formal curriculum works to control students' thinking, it is just as important to understand how gaslighting and shaming exert control on Black students' bodies. Whether by finding derogatory peer depictions or through staff members noting the presence of their Black bodies in negative or exoticizing ways, students of color quickly found their "proper place" in the school. Like any oppressed group, these students of color also worked to carve out safe spaces and places in school, ranging from Little Africa to the girls' restrooms, to other locations that allowed blackness and brownness to exist either in public or hidden away.

Despite cultural differences between those who lived in Hawks Corner or Smithville, or between those raised in city or suburban contexts, students of color felt enough pressure to set these differences aside during school hours, a coping mechanism found in community. As students of color are under pressure from racialized sociocultural norms and values in schools, questions about who they are and who they are expected to be can be addressed in these safe spaces and places. In other words, students used safe spaces to openly discuss the pressures surrounding their differences in normalized-white places. Little Africa functioned as a place for students of color to dialogue about these norms and the effects they had on their daily experiences.

Little Africa was a specific place where, as both student and staff participants articulated, generations of students of color had met to discuss the inequities in school. Because the physical location and sociocultural position of Little Africa seldom changed, it provided increased opportunities for staff and administration to easily surveil students of color. In other words, as students of color are met with hostile aggressions in school, they set aside their in-group differences to battle the everyday racism of schooling, carving out safe spaces like Little Africa. Yet, in an ironic twist, the concentration of Black bodies in one area becomes a point of concern for administration and therefore a place to observe after school. In a cruel cycle, the pressures of daily aggressions led students to carve out safe spaces but such spaces and places then became points of interest and increased observation for administration, which, in turn, increased the anxiety students of color felt at school.

Fields, Schooling, and Negotiating Shame

Turning from how students' anxiety necessitated the creation of safe spaces and places, in this section I focus on how these students traversed educational

boundaries and borders. Throughout this book, I have used the term "negotiation" to refer to ordinary, everyday interactions between local actors that are contextualized by curricular and sociopolitical norms. Further, I have detailed how local actors construct meaning through ongoing negotiations with both human and nonhuman bodies. As with any negotiation, there are potential gains and losses for the negotiators. Although power remained ubiquitous as it was enacted against students of color and despite layers of agentic contingencies, participants used their agency to decide how, when, and for which gains they would traverse the boundaries and borders of school.

How one negotiates, makes sense of, and orders their world is a knotted process that is layered with social norms, personal identities, values, and the like. Pierre Bourdieu (1993), like many others (e.g., Glissant, 1997; Lorde, 1984; McKittrick, 2021; Wynter, 2003), argues that human perception of reality is always relational; to exist is to exist socially, in relation to others. People organize their sense of self and society through a series of semiautonomous and specialized spheres that Bourdieu calls "fields." Through power dynamics, fields structure human behavior. Specifically, Bourdieu (1995) wrote:

> A field is a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these position-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field.
>
> *(p. 39)*

In other words, a field is a social system in which individuals and institutions with shared interests and characteristics both operate and compete. Local actors, whom Bourdieu calls "agents," all occupy a position within the field. Each position entails different dispositions and, therefore, likely or potential courses of action for the agent. Bourdieu explains that agents can aim to either conserve or transform the structure of relations, leaving room for dissent. The positions that agents occupy are determined by a number of things: habitus (ingrained skills, habits, and dispositions), doxa (behavior adopted through repetition), and cultural capital (the currency that helps people navigate culture).

Although the image of a "field" seems rather static, I use it akin to Massey's (2005) work on space, which argues that fluid interactions are driven, but not always defined, by boundaries and borders. Further, I approach fields not as a product of static contemporary contexts but as entangled with sociohistorical and political underpinnings (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Massey, 2005; Visweswaran, 2010). This is true of all institutional contexts, especially schools, as the various forms of curriculum are always already steeped in sociopolitical and historical norms and values. Students across identities negotiated the curriculum in ways that formed and informed their ontoepistemologies within fields. Imaging the forms of curriculum as social fields is important to considering

how fields affect students and for tracing the trajectories of educational effects on students, schools, and society.

As students of color traverse the contours of schooling, they use their agency and cultural capital to negotiate daily experiences within a structure of power that marginalizes their voices, being, and knowing through current and historically bound contexts. However, although there is no outside of power structures within fields, local actors always have a degree of agency through which they can enact their cultural capital (Ortner, 2006). In this way, cultural capital is always conditional within the fields where power and capital are in action. This is true for all local actors, regardless of factors like race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, first language(s), or ability. However, with increased social marginalization, the conditions under which one's cultural capital can be nullified increase.

Cultural capital is traditionally used to discuss the nonfinancial assets that an individual possesses or can gain to more successfully traverse sociocultural power structures. One way that all local actors in this study garnered capital was through shaming others. Elsewhere, I have called this "capitals of shame" to explore how those with privilege and power employ sociocultural norms to at once cultivate criteria for shaming, and then use those criteria to publicly declare people or groups incompetent or impotent (Wozolek, 2019). At Milford, both traditional forms of cultural capital—like athletic ability and participation—and capitals of shame—like shaming girls for their bodies and blackness—existed across interactions, possibilities, and ways of being, knowing, and doing. The next two sections, split along the false binary of gender, explicate how these forms of capital were used across the school.

Assuming the Position Under the Conditions: Cultural Capital and Being Black and Male

For students of color at Milford, conditional cultural capital was both significant to broader sociocultural norms and resonant with students' everyday experiences. Young men of color, for example, used the conditional cultural capital of athletics, gender, the performativity of blackness, and academic performance to create safe spaces and garner degrees of social mobility. Yet it is important not only to understand how their use of this capital successfully created safe spaces for (some) male students but also to discuss how the broader conditions of schooling urged the failure of this agency.

As described in previous chapters, Milford was particularly oriented toward the promotion of academics and athletics. Although this is not that different from other high schools in the Midwest, I specifically attend to the use of these two factors as mechanisms for marginalization in the school. Students' academic success had awarded the school an "excellent" rating by standardized-test ranking. This reputation for excellence was furthered by the large percentage of students who went on to colleges and universities. But academic success, while

important to the school and community, was also a source of stress for teachers as they wrestled with state and local proposals to tie merit pay to student test scores. These highlighted the "testing problems" in the school, which were generally described in terms of gender, race, and disability. Students of color (particularly boys) that could "academically perform" became the exception to the rule in the eyes of staff and were given a degree of capital to move more freely within the building.

However, as heard through Matthew's experiences, expectations of academic failure often overshadowed these students' drive to succeed. These expectations were shaped by the sociopolitical ideals that formed the racialized hidden curriculum, which devalued students of color's ways of knowing, and were implicit in staff members' attitudes toward students of color and made explicit through events like staff meetings where failure was overtly linked with race, gender, and ability. If students of color were "good students," they were, like their white peers, less often questioned as they moved around the building during class periods. However, if they were "bad students," any attempt at academic success was ultimately measured against the predetermined understanding of their failure, such that failure became the likely outcome rather than the ability to succeed.

In terms of athletics, Black and brown male students garnered a particularly large amount of cultural capital through sports. The normalization of athletic pride in the school along with, as several sound files described, the pervasive ideas and ideals of the "Black athlete" among white students promoted an appreciation for males of color who were athletically talented—and almost an expectation that they would be. The boys used this cultural capital to move more freely in spaces and places like the hallway and the gym. As Da'von explained, they used the image of the "Black athlete that was not with the thugs" as a tool to expand their space in school, as in their use of spaces like the gym. However, as John explained in his file "Only Black Athlete,"[2] and as others reiterated, this cultural capital was largely conditional on the athletic success of their white peers, leading to feelings of exclusion and anxiety among athletes of color. Students articulated an understanding that their athletic success could rarely surpass that of their white peers and, when it did, that they would be met with further aggressions from jealous peers.

Finally, as mentioned before, white students imitated a version of Black culture that students of color identified as essentialized understandings from popular culture. White students expressed that this behavior was only acceptable at school and that "acting ghetto" at home would simply not be tolerated. Although these actions went generally unnoticed as racialized acts by staff and administration, students of color were deeply disturbed that their peers could get away with "acting Black" while they got in trouble for "being Black." Aligned with Goffman's (1959) discussion of presentations of self, male students of color used these same cultural ideas to perform images of the "angry Black man" in order to create space within Little Africa away from their white peers.

Ultimately, however, boys of color could not use the same sociocultural expressions of self as their white peers. In doing so they were considered "too Black," and their movements would be further restricted by administrative surveillance and peer aggression. Using the capital of their race and culturally racialized images of Black men compromised the overall space that male students of color were given by the staff and administration. In John's example, an act of flirtation was taken as an act of aggression and was quashed immediately and without apology. Altogether, the use of such behavior did gain male students of color some wiggle room from stultifying school norms and values. But it nonetheless called attention to the boys as behaving outside of school norms and values in ways that pushed them up the disciplinary ladder and into the school-to-prison pipeline.

Conditional Movement: Constraints at the Intersection of Race and Girlhood

Cultural capital for young women of color was strongly determined by the intersection of race and gender. In the previous section I argued that conditional cultural capital for boys was relational in that race often trumped available capital. Following Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1994) framing of intersectionality, in which she explores how women of color face unique forms of oppression based on their race and gender, here I focus on the intersectional oppressions faced by girls of color at Milford. Earlier, while discussing the complications of cultural capital that athletically inclined girls of color faced, I explained that athletic status for girls produced social mobility within local racialized expectations of athletic ability and the school's promotion of such talents. However, these talents did not open up the same physical mobility within the school as it did for boys of color. While athletic boys of color moved easily between the gym and the hall, athletic girls of color remained rather immobile within the safe space afforded by Little Africa, unable to use their capital to garner the same social or physical mobility. Further, many young female athletes of color noted that their bodies were shamed for being "too masculine." In this case, capitals of shame worked against other forms of cultural capital, showing how such shaming disproportionately impacts girls.

Perhaps the most important kind of cultural capital that girls of color worked to possess was what they described as "acting white." Their conversations around "acting white" to garner affirming attention from white staff, students, and administrators are aligned with dialogues about "whiteness as property" in legal and curriculum studies scholarship (Burbas, 2011; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Both the data from this study and this scholarship establish that "acting white" through speech patterns, hairstyles, and actions is an attractive trait that allows one to better negotiate schooling. Girls of color openly expressed the need to do things like relax or straighten their hair, speak without using Black vernacular, or "be on their best behavior" in order to "pass" in school.

Additionally, "acting white" included avoiding listening loudly to music, rapping, or joking too loudly with their friends. I do not believe that girls of color should have to change their ways of being, nor I am not arguing for some "Dangerous Minds," "Stand and Deliver," or "Freedom Writers" movie-like transformation, where shifts in one's way of being is the key to unlocking educational success. Rather, I argue that the everyday difficulties girls of color faced led them to conform to white feminine ideals in order to gain the slightest amount of wiggle room in an otherwise stultifying context.

Girls of color expressed several advantages of "acting white." First, several participants noted the ability to get more passes from teachers to leave class without receiving too many questions. As Raquel put it, "The Blacker I act, the less I get the hell outta class." Girls of color also expressed receiving less pushback in academic fields when they "acted whiter." As Raquel explained, acting white accorded them greater respect and better treatment among staff members. Although participants shared stories similar to Sierra's about a staff member's surprise at her ability to read, they equally discussed the opportunities that "acting white" brought them in school.

Much like the boys of color expressed the tensions between those from Smithville and Hawks Corner, girls of color were deeply aware of the difficulties that female transfer students of color faced as they worked to assimilate into a predominantly white, suburban culture. As Brianna explained,

> We don't act white at home, but I was raised here. I know what is expected at school. And, I guess in lots of ways, it's just a part of who I am now. I couldn't go live with my cousins in the city. But these girls who move in, they don't know the first way to start acting properly.

"Acting properly" in this context is not a reference to "acting Black" or "acting white." Rather, it is an articulation of "acting feminine." Though such actions were tied to white ideals in this context, they positioned girls within a secondary marginalizing space of gender. Girls of color either conformed to a particular set of ideas and ideals about girls' behavior at school or they were seen as unable to adapt sufficiently. Girls of color who did not make these changes often fell quickly into the school-to-prison pipeline or stepped onto the first rungs of the disciplinary ladder.

Although learning how to "act white" was a skill that was important to all students of color at Milford, it was particularly so for girls. Acting white facilitated access to passes to leave class but also to an understanding that they might possibly compete in academic pursuits with their white peers. Further, while boys of color could play into normalized ideas and ideals of masculinity and blackness to gain space for their actions, girls could not. In fact, for girls of color at Milford, one of the only certain ways to gain such space was by working toward being/becoming within an ideal of whiteness, which worked as a possession that could create

cultural capital within the school. With each instance of "acting white," girls of color noted that they gained more academic capital. They explicitly argued that attending to white ideas and ideals of femininity was critical to teachers' perceptions of their ability to perform academically. Returning to Raquel's aforementioned comments, girls of color explained that if they wanted to "get an A, all [they had] do is be white." As she continued, Raquel demonstrated a few key aspects of what it meant to "be white," pulling her hair back tight and speaking with precise, genteel phrases.

Female participants of color who described school as "not a problem" often carried themselves in ways similar to Raquel's performance as a part of their natural approach to interacting with staff and administration. Although this way of being carried into their peer interactions in group interviews and was observable in hallway interactions, when girls "slipped into Team Dark Skin," as Brianna joked, "they look[ed] around, hoping no one [saw] what they became." Similar to Goffman's (1959) description of the versions of self that local actors present in their everyday lives, girls of color were constantly worried about the perceptions that "blackness" might place on their identities at school, which was directly related to their success as students. Those who did not perform these prescribed roles often found themselves quickly on the school-to-prison pipeline, while those who did more easily attained levels of academic success, as defined in state standards.

While "acting white" functioned as cultural capital that helped girls of color attain certain aspects of social and academic success, much like the cultural capital employed by the boys of color, it was conditional. Girls of color expressed anger when describing the conditions under which their academic cultural capital fell apart. This conditional cultural capital failed for girls, who could aspire to whiteness but never be "white enough" in their physical bodies or the way they ultimately were in the world. The girls were acutely aware that, despite relaxed hair or avoiding yoga pants, they were still a marginalized minority in the school and their differences were openly noted and Othered. Girls often articulated the impossibility of actually *being* white in contrast to the mere performance of *acting* white. Despite their best attempts to "pass," their race would never allow complete legitimization of their ways of being. Just as it was impossible for them to escape their gender and the sexist ways that Milford operated, no matter how hard they tried, they could never be white enough for their blackness to not be conceptualized as a problem by peers, teachers, and administrators alike.

Why "Be" If You'll Never Pass? Agency and the Underlife

In Gutierrez and Rymes (1993) discussion of Goffman's (1961) work on asylums, they articulate that participation in the underlife of an institution includes a "range of activities that people develop to distance themselves from the surrounding institution" (p. 451). Gaining participation in the underlife means that,

to varying degrees, a local actor will play into predefined sociocultural ideas and ideals of their role within that institution (Goffman, 1961). By attending to these roles, the status quo is fulfilled, giving actors a certain amount of space to participate in nonconforming ways of being within the institution. For example, athletic boys of color attended to the normalized ideas and ideals of the "Black superstar athlete" that were perpetuated through the hidden curriculum at Milford. This matters in terms of body image, because just as female bodies of color were exoticized, athletic Black male bodies were also valued. The null curriculum of images of African slaves being sold off to plantation owners is recapitulated in the hidden curriculum of professional athletes being placed on public "blocks" and auctioned off to team owners. Revealing the hidden value of the racialized male body, the experiences of Black athletes at Milford reflected the null curriculum of both the school and broader cultural events like the draft, which were valued among students and staff.

As boys used their peers', teachers', and administrators' ideas about what it meant to be male, Black, and an athlete, they further worked with images of the "angry Black man." This gave them the room to "act tough" while largely avoiding administrative and staff scrutiny for the same actions for which their nonathletic peers often faced punishment. Along with the ability to perform such roles more freely was the reward of social space allowing them to participate in the underlife. Boys of color who overly attended to the "angry Black male" stereotype and not to white expectations of subservience were often pulled away from the underlife, either through punitive measures on the disciplinary ladder or administrative disruptions during their time in Little Africa.

There are two important factors at play within the students' participation within these roles. The first is that performing these roles is an act of agency and a presentation of oneself that helps satisfy status quo norms and values (Goffman, 1959). Students of color, particularly those who were raised in the suburban community, were acutely aware of these behavioral expectations and knew how and when they needed to be satisfied. Students of color who moved in from city spaces were often under pressure to learn the new context quickly and struggled to understand the ideals of blackness being presented to them through the hidden curriculum. For example, as Sierra explains with indignation in the sound file "Do You Do Drugs?,"[3] she did not understand how race was a marker for drug use and had difficulty understanding how playing into such images could be helpful.

Swidler's (2001) cultural toolkit analogy is helpful here, or a set of tools that all local actors are given. In this analogy, all students are given the same set of sociocultural tools regardless of their ability to use such tools or of their need for other tools in a given context. Here, students of color used these tools to negotiate normalized ideas and ideals that were predominantly about Black culture. Students of color were often classified as African American regardless of their actual race or culture, particularly if they were biracial Black and Latinx. Students

raised in this suburban context were far more prepared and conditioned to use the given tools to negotiate these roles than their transfer student counterparts. As a result, transfer students were far more likely to miss out on full participation in the underlife of the school, as they did not attend to the prescribed roles of being. In this way, the same cultural toolkit that facilitated movement for students raised in the suburban context also prohibited the participation of urban transfer students.

In addition, the existence of such roles relates to Mills' (1998) discussion of social ontology. As Mills describes, social ontology is a predefined social construction of the way one can be in the world, akin to what I have called agentic contingencies. It is an imposed glass ceiling for one's ways of being, creating, to use Mills' term, "subpersons" of a society. Here I describe these ontologies as composing the underlife of the institution. While students of color play into these roles for their own benefit within the school, they also participate in the reification of their own social ontologies. Or, as the one administrator noted in his interview, such stereotypes have a base. When students, administrators, and staff observed students playing into such social ontologies, they often felt justified in their racialized understandings of students of color. Thus, there would be no Little Africa without the participation of students of color in the reification of social ontologies, ideas, and ideals, both positive and those that negatively frame their differences as behavioral and academic deficits.

Students' participation in the underlife of the institution opened two kinds of spaces within the school. The first are what Goffman (1961) calls "surveillance spaces," defined here as areas that students needed no excuse to be in, but which were "subject to the usual authority and restrictions of the establishment" (p. 228). The second, to which I return below, are what Goffman called "territorial jurisdictions," or socially partitioned spaces that permit local actors to relax away from the sociocultural demands of an institution. While I argue that Little Africa was in fact both, in terms of the former, one of the "restrictions of the establishment" was a required pass to be in common areas like the hall and the cafeteria during instructional hours. This requirement, of course, was listed for the broader safety of the school but rarely restricted students' movements around the building.

Little Africa was established in a surveillance space, in a hallway where there are cameras and opportunities for staff and administrative observation. The repeated iterations of Little Africa in surveillance spaces were particularly important to the interruption of in-group difference between boys of color. These divergences centered predominantly on cultural variances between urban and suburban youth and subsequent questions about masculinity. As boys played into a social ontology of masculinity and blackness that required physical aggression, as previously described, the surveillance space of Little Africa offered at least one reason not to engage in *too much* physical aggression. In other words, the students did not engage in physically violent acts because they were being watched and because it was a

safe space that was respected within the group. Whether in the cafeteria in the morning or in the hall in the afternoon, such surveillance became an underlying rationale for nonviolent conflict resolution.

As the boys of color pushed at the edges between aggressive behavior and violence, the administration used their actions to justify the space as a point of observation. This is like Massey's (2005) description of two maps—one drawn by the Aztecs and the other drawn by the Spanish—which depict the same space from very different perspectives on history, politics, and their trajectories. The ways that administrators and staff perceived the space known as Little Africa and the students of color who populated it, their racialized conceptual map of students' ways of being, was not wrong, exactly. As discussed before, students did indeed play into their expected social ontologies. Such actions aligned with and furthered administrative understandings of their ways of being. However, much like the Spanish in the Aztec empire, administrators and staff were able to use their privilege to essentially ignore student of color perspectives and trajectories within the space in order to legitimize their own spatial mapping. In this way, the privilege of administrative power intersected with white ways of knowing to support administrators' ignorance of the perspectives and positions of students of color.

Yet, the use of the cafeteria in the morning or the hall throughout the day as "Little Africa" was not just a way to avoid possible violence due to the very real potential of escalating in-group tensions. It was also a public claiming of space in an institution with racist understandings. Little Africa therefore functioned not only as a safe space where students of color could "be themselves," but also as a public proclamation of this being in a marginalizing place called school. Students' participation in the underlife created by this safe space required their participation in socially prescribed roles that re-reified public ideas about students of color at Milford High. Student of color conceptualization of the space known as Little Africa was often a claim of presence in a place where their ways of being were intended to be absent. Much like Massey's (2005) example of the maps of Mexico City, both maps are right, but they are imbricated with separate trajectories and histories.

As students of color articulated throughout the study, Little Africa was also a territorial jurisdiction for students of color and some LGBTGNQIA2S+ students. In this way, it was both a territorial jurisdiction and a surveillance space. Because it was both, students of color needed to simultaneously keep up particular appearances, never fully being themselves as they might off school grounds, and to maintain a certain image in order to keep their public space. This meant that students' ways of being were in constant friction (Tsing, 2005) with sociocultural ideas and ideals. As Tsing argued, "as a metaphorical image, friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power" (p. 5), explaining that these encounters do not always produce positive or equal effects for all participants. In terms of the friction between territorial jurisdictions and surveillance spaces, the claim of a public space for

students of color created considerate dissonance with broader sociocultural norms and values. In these ways, Little Africa made the students' doubled consciousness explicit, as they needed to act according to whitestream norms and values to keep and maintain space in a school organized to marginalize them through those same dominant ways of being and knowing.

In order to create safe spaces and use their agency to construct territorial jurisdictions as a means of negotiating schooling, girls of color used the bathroom as a partitioned space from both boys and staff during the school day. Whereas the bathroom provided a respite from many stresses and aggressions—from the everyday indignities of being in a place where girls and women were devalued to privately grieving sexual assault—it did not afford complete safety or privacy. For example, just as I heard the girls talking and singing in the bathroom, their presence in this space did not go completely unnoticed by peers, teachers, or administrators. Goffman (1961) similarly argued that territorial jurisdictions are never completely unknown by those working in the institution but, rather, that they are ignored until attention to such spaces becomes necessary to preserving institutional power. One instance of such maintenance of power became clear to me when an administrator explained that he had been vaguely aware of such use of the bathroom but had recently decided to talk to some girls who were particularly loud there one afternoon.

Other examples of territorial jurisdictions from this study were the athletic boys of color using the gym or all students of color using my room as a relief from everyday schooling. These spaces presented the possibility for students to remove the protective layers of their roles as students of color within a predominantly white space. In other words, they offered a safe space. However, even these safe spaces did not exist without the potential for surveillance. For example, in my room I was dually positioned as researcher and teacher—as both a participant observer and enforcer of school rules. In the gym, a space where boys of color often felt respect beyond their role as student, not only was their presence noted as a possible disruption to classes in session, but their sound carried further in the large space. When boys of color joked around at the end of the day by pushing each other into the gym, both the squeak of the door and the sound of laughter resonated in the large space and were noted among staff. In Milford High, all places, even safe spaces, were points of possible surveillance for students of color. As students momentarily removed the shielding layers that permitted them to negotiate their differences in school, there remained the understanding that all spaces were surveillance spaces. This impacted students' interactions in both safe and unsafe spaces such that they could never fully "be," knowing that every movement could potentially be watched or heard.

Similarly, there was a price to pay for the creation of and participation in safe spaces. For example, as boys of color worked to negotiate ideas and ideals of racialized masculinity across in-group indifferences, threats of violence within the group compromised their sense of safety. However, to "keep" Little Africa,

participating boys had to keep playing particular roles that reinscribed and reified these sociocultural understandings of their ways of being and knowing. These roles also pushed students onto the discipline ladder and were largely responsible for the ontological death of many students of color. In short, the price students paid for being in school at large was far greater than any price they paid for their (re)creation of and participation in Little Africa.

Notes

1 To review this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/downfall.mp3
2 To review this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Only-athlete-of-color.mp3
3 To review this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/drugs.mp3

Bibliography

Agar, M. H. (1996). *The professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography* (2nd ed.). Academic Press.

Alonso, G. (2009). *Our schools suck: Students talk back to a segregated nation on the failures of urban education*. New York University Press.

Annamma, S. A., Anyon, Y., Joseph, N. M., Farrar, J., Greer, E., Downing, B., & Simmons, J. (2019). Black girls and school discipline: The complexities of being overrepresented and understudied. *Urban Education*, *54*(2), 211–242.

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.

Bethune, M. M. (1938). Clarifying our vision with the facts. *Journal of Negro History*, 7(2), 10–15.

Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural production*. Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1995). The political field, the social science field, and the journalistic field. In R. Benson and É. Neveu (Eds.) (2005), *Bourdieu and the journalistic field* (pp. 29–47). Polity.

Burbas, K. L. (2011). Race, charter schools, and consciousness capitalism: On the spatial politics of whiteness and property (and the unconscionable assault on back New Orleans). *Harvard Educational Review*, *81*(2), 296–330.

Christle, C. A., Jolivette, K., & Nelson, C. M. (2005). Breaking the school to prison pipeline: Identifying school risk and protective factors for youth delinquency. *Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal*, *13*(2), 69–88.

Cooper, A. J. (1892). *A voice from the South, by a Black woman from the South*. University of North Carolina Press.

Crenshaw, K. W. (1994). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In M. A. Fineman & R. Mykitiuk (Eds.), *The public nature of private violence* (pp. 93–118). Routledge.

Crenshaw, K. W., Ocen, P., & Nanda, J. (2012). Black girls matter: Pushed out, overpoliced and underprotected. *African American Policy Forum*. Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies.

DeCuir, J., & Dixson, A. (2004). "So when it comes out, they aren't that surprised that it is there": Using critical race theory as a tool of analysis of race and racism in education. *Educational Researcher, 33*, 26–31.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of Black folk*. McClurgand.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1926). Criteria of Negro art. *The Crisis, 32*, 290–297.

Fanon, F. (1964). *Toward the African revolution: Political essays*. Grove Press.

Fasching-Varner, K. J., Albert, K. A., Mitchell, R. W., & Allen, C. M. (2014). *Racial battle fatigue in higher education: Exposing the myth of post-racial America*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Gershon, W. S. (2017). *Curriculum and students in classrooms: Everyday urban education in an era of standardization*. Lexington Books.

Glissant, É. (1997). *Poetics of relation*. University of Michigan Press.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Anchor Books.

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*. Doubleday.

Gupta, A., & Ferguson, J. (1997). *Culture, power, place: Explorations in critical anthropology*. Duke University Press.

Gutierrez, K., & Rymes, B. (1993). Script, counterscript, and underlife in the classroom: James Brown versus Brown v. Board of Education. *Harvard Educational Review*, *63*(3), 445–471.

Helfenbein, R.J. (2021). *Critical geographies of education: Space, place, and curriculum inquiry*. Routledge.

Hines-Datiri, D., & Carter Andrews, D. J. (2020). The effects of zero tolerance policies on Black girls: Using critical race feminism and figured worlds to examine school discipline. *Urban Education*, *55*(10), 1419–1440.

Jackson, P. W. (1968). *Life in classrooms*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, *97*(1), 47–68.

Laura, C. T. (2014). *Being bad: My baby brother and the school-to-prison pipeline*. Teachers College Press.

Lei, J. L. (2003). (Un)necessary toughness?: Those "loud Black girls" and those "quiet Asian boys." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *34*(2), 158–181.

Locke, A. (1935). The dilemma of segregation. *Journal of Negro Education*, 4(3), 406–411.

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches by Audre Lorde*. Crossing Press.

Mahmood, C.K. (2008). Anthropology from the bones: A memoir of fieldwork, survival, and commitment, *Anthropology and Humanism*, *33*(2), 1–11.

Massey, D. (2005). *For space*. Sage.

McKittrick, K. (2021). *Dear science and other stories*. Duke University Press.

Mills, C. W. (1998). *Blackness visible: Essays on philosophy and race*. Cornell University Press.

Morris, M. W. (2016). *Pushout: The criminalization of Black girls in school*. The New Press.

Nespor, J. (1997). *Tangled up in school: Politics, space, bodies and signs in the educational process*. Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ortner, S. B. (2006). *Anthropology and social theory: Culture, power and the acting subject*. Duke University Press.

Sabzalian, L. (2019). *Indigenous children's survivance in public schools*. Routledge.

Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (1982). Roger Harker and Schonhausen: From the familiar to the strange and back again. In G. Spindler (Ed.), *Doing the ethnography of schooling*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Swidler, A. (2001). *Talk of love: How culture matters*. University of Chicago Press.

Tatum, B. D. (2003). "*Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?": And other conversations about race*. Basic Books.

Tsing, A. L. (2005). *Friction: An ethnography on global connection*. Princeton University Press.

Varenne, H., & McDermott, R. (1998). *Successful failure: The school America builds*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Visweswaran, K. (2010). *Un/common cultures: Racism and the rearticulation of cultural difference*. Duke University Press.

Williams, K. T. E., Baszile, D. T., & Guillory, N. A. (Eds.). (2020). *Black women theorizing curriculum studies in colour and curves*. Routledge.

Winn, M. T., & Behizadeh, N. (2011). The right to be literate: Literacy, education, and the school-to-prison pipeline. *Review of Research in Education*, *35*(1), 147–173.

Woodson, C. G. (1933). *The miseducation of the negro*. Tribeca Books.

Wozolek, B. (2019). Mothering redoux: Agency and joy in negotiating capitals of shame. *Journal of Gender Studies*, *28*(8), 873–882.

Wynter, S. (2003). Unsettling the coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom: Towards the human, after man, its overrepresentation—An argument. *CR: The New Centennial Review*, *3*(3), 257–337.

9
NECROPOLITICS OF SCHOOLING

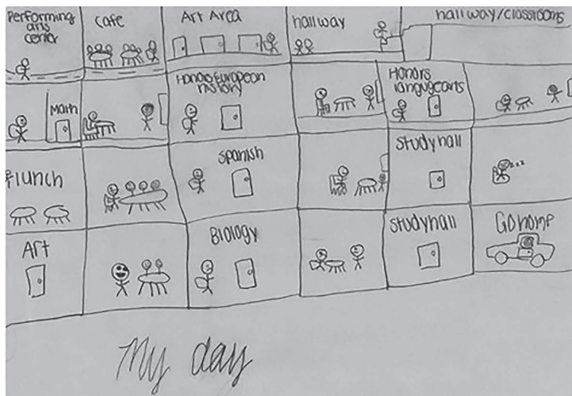


FIGURE 9.1 Ambika's map

Ambika: This is a map out of my day. I come to school late because, well, it's hard to get up in the morning. You know what's going to be at school, waiting for you. I enter the building through the performing arts center and go straight to the cafeteria, to Little Africa. When the music starts to play, I walk past the art hallway. I'm smiling because I'm walking to the main hallway to hang out in the other Little Africa before the bell rings. I walk up the stairs, into a hallway with lots of classrooms. I've labeled nothing. Class means nothing to me. Then I got to math. I'm

DOI: 10.4324/9781003335245-10

smiling here but only because it's easier to smile, nod and be polite. He's really not a good teacher anyway. Then I go to Honors European History. I'm not smiling on the way because I think the teacher says racist things sometimes. Now I go to Honors Language Arts. My smile is really gone. I draw myself small because here I feel small. Then I go to study hall. It's one door to either sleeping or being made fun of because kids feel it is okay to use the "N-word" there. They say it to me all the time. I'm not even Black. I'm Indian. So I'm sleeping in this picture. Then I go to lunch. I like lunch this year because everyone is in it and we can hang out together. I feel safe. Then I go to biology. I'm really not smiling here. The teacher doesn't mean to be, but he says things that make me feel uncomfortable. Like I should be smarter because I'm Asian and not one of "those kids." Then I go to study hall, again. I didn't draw another picture for this one. I don't want to talk about how study hall is in the afternoon. Ok . . . I'll just say that I can't sleep so the other thing happens a lot. Then I go home. I am smiling again. My favorite part of the day is art class because I love art. Sometimes well . . . most of the time I hate school because they are judgmental ignorant people that think they are better than everyone else. I want to say this: racism goes beyond color. RACISM GOES BEYOND COLOR. And, I share hatred because of that.

FIGURE 9.2 Jahmir's map

Jahmir: This is my day: I wake up in the morning and come to school through the doors near the gym. I'm late and so I never make it in time to go to the cafeteria. I just don't want to come in until the last second. Why go to a place where they just think you're a stupid nigger? I go to Mrs. M's class. I drew her room because she continued to help me and proved to me that she was willing to push me and my friends forward. Then I go to the media center. It's okay in there. Kids are not really watched so, to be honest, they call kids "niggers" a lot. Dirty niggers. Stupid niggers. Nappy niggers. You name it, they say it. Always under their breaths. Like I don't hear. Like the teachers don't hear. Anyway, then I go to Mrs. W. She's ok. Then I go to the gym. I can pick the music there but the white kids are always complaining then. Our music is too "Black." They don't want to "be in a class that's like the ghetto." Then I have lunch. I HATE it there. Kids throw food and blame it on you. You can't tell the teachers because they already think you're bad. I know, for a fact, that someone actually got a detention for not picking up a white kid's food. Why refuse? So then I go to Woz's class. Just to check in. Gotta check in with momma at least once a day. I like Woz. She took interest in me even when she didn't know who I was or anything about me. She took the chance on a guy like me! Then I go to Little Africa again. It's the place where everybody meets their friends and basically you get to know your own race and intermix with many of the people that do what you do. Then I go home. It's tough because even in Little Africa they're always looking at you. I just deal with it. You can't change the way people look at you. I just move on. I go home and try not to think about it.

At Milford High School, students of color negotiated the spaces and places of a predominantly white school through performances of self that were directly related to predetermined social ontologies, understandings that were in turn constructed through sociocultural norms and values. These performances were layers of protection that students of color used to help them negotiate a school that was, at best, restrictive, but more generally untenable for their ways of being and knowing. These were therefore not simply performances of self but also negotiations of self at the intersection of "who one is" and the everyday of marginalization in school. Although all adolescents traverse terrains of identity in relation to sociocultural norms, students of color in this context were positioned to perform such roles in order to gain safe spaces in school.

In the context of scholarship on schooling, this everyday concession of self and the pressures of racialized curricula are significant for several reasons. First, scholars have noted that the school-to-prison pipeline shows how schools are integral to the "life and death in our United 'Carceral' States of America conversation" (Fasching-Varner et al., 2014, p. 411). Although these conversations are well theorized, they tend to lack the everyday narratives that mark the beginning

of students' journey into this pipeline, from which few students of color return. This book therefore contributes empirical evidence to our understanding of the ordinary, everyday ways that students are funneled into school-to-prison pipelines, and, in many cases, into educational choking and lynching. Further, it opens up space for further consideration of the everyday mechanisms in schooling (e.g., standardized testing, the formal curriculum, or innate sociocultural norms) that are normalized and unintentionally designed for the *successful failure* (Varenne & McDermott, 1998) of students of color.

Second, much-needed attention has been paid to the recent success of girls of color in terms of entering and continuing with higher education relative to their male counterparts (Buchmann et al., 2008; King, 2017). But often lacking in this literature is an understanding of how girls of color assimilate behaviors of "acting white" that allow them to "pass" in school and validate their ways of being to white peers, staff, and administration. To be clear, this is not an argument that all successful women of color had to ascribe to whiteness or caste off their natural ways of being, knowing, or doing to be successful. Rather, it is an attention to how schools like Milford use educational necropolitics as a tool to ensure the ontoepistemological dying and death of some students through systems of schooling and narrow ideals of success. The stories shared by participants in this research show how, by integrating a white cishetero performance of femininity acted as a protective layer while in school. Girls of color conformed to norms and values that buttressed their cultural capital and gave them the wiggle room needed for academic success at Milford. Yet these girls simultaneously lose a part of themselves through this process, something visible in the struggle of transfer students as they worked tirelessly to conform.

In this case, one might ask if what was lost is as significant as what was gained. What students of color give up to be "successful" in schools like Milford is central to understanding the damage done by oppressive interactions in schooling. This book identifies how such oppressions are used to gain cultural capital, including power garnered through capitals of shame. This has important implications about what it might mean for particular populations to garner and use cultural capital (e.g., young women in higher education) while others often cannot (e.g., young men being left out of such accomplishments).

Finally, this study has called attention to the everyday ways that students of color are marginalized through schooling. As I have argued, this is a result of racialized curricula (formal, hidden, enacted, and null) that do not recognize students of color's ways of being and knowing as legitimate behaviors in schools, directly affecting students' self-worth and reinscribing self-fulfilling prophecies of failure. It is important to remember that these curricula simultaneously affirm white students' positionality and superiority, impacting both students of color and their white peers, staff, and administration. Specifically, white students, as Jeff articulated in the file "Downfall of the World,"[1] came to understand their peers through the same negative lens because of such curricula. While students of color operated under this restrictive social ontology, white students, staff, and

administrators operated under collective memories (Winfield, 2007) that manifested within social epistemology. Of course, white students too operate under a social ontology, but the curricula that enforce an ontology of inferiority for students of color also enact an ontology of dominance for white students. In other words, all students' ontologies are socially constructed and, therefore, the authority of one group is inextricable to the control of another.

Just as collective memories are sociohistorically and politically bound (Winfield, 2007), they are held as much in one's body as they are in the mind. By this I mean that one is as much affected by these collective memories in their ways of being as they are in their ways of knowing; these memories are as ontological as they are epistemological. Just as all ontologies are socially constructed, so too are epistemologies necessarily social. Part of privileging the Western sense of knowledge is that the social aspect of knowledge is hidden in plain sight. From this perspective, the social aspect of epistemologies tends to function as hidden curriculum. Following Mills (1998) and the broader history of African American intellectual traditions, we must attend to the social in understandings and interactions that are often considered personal.

During this study, it became clear that the schools' hidden curriculum affected parents of color and their own reification of social epistemologies. For example, after Damari's arrest in the cafeteria, parents discussed concerns not only about the incident but also about how it was replayed on social media in ways that were unabated by the district. Students across genders relayed that their parents had renewed discussions with them following the incident about policing, resisting arrest, and not only their older fear of their children not coming home if they are stopped by police out in the community but a newfound fear about if they would be safe at school. Another example is when John hugged a white female student. For young men of color, conversation at home included topics like why they should not even be talking with white girls, much less trying to date or touch them. Young women of color received lectures about the dangers of dating white boys, explaining how they would not hesitate to take advantage of a girl of color and that it would be considered the girl's fault. The girls referenced Emma's story of assault, where the boy's family had blamed her for "leading him on as a girlfriend" and not "knowing the consequences."

As I listened to these stories, I could not help but think about how this talk seemed as though it was pulled directly from conversations parents might have had with their children surrounding cases like the Scottsboro Boys, Ed Johnson, or Emmett Till, all situations where the central offense was a Black man touching, looking at, or being perceived as desiring a white woman. John's situation, as well as parents' reactions, seemed to awaken a history of oppression that could be heard within the null curriculum. As scholars have argued, marginalization in school engenders and maintains broader sociocultural constructs of racialization (Cooper, 1892; Du Bois, 1903; Woodson, 1933). A regular discussion between participants surrounded how their parents warned them of the dangers of being

Black in school before school started each year. Similarly, their parents viewed these in-school events as moments to protect their children from sociocultural understandings that could leave their child in prison, in John's case, or sexually assaulted, in Emma's.

Another way to understand this phenomenon is through epigenetics. The term "epigenetics" refers to changes in the physical structure of a person's DNA that affect genetic expression and includes evidence that trauma can leave a biochemical mark on a person's chromosomes that is passed down to subsequent generations (Yehuda & Bierer, 2009). While much research has been done on how epigenetics impacts groups like Holocaust survivors and their descendants, it is possible that epigenetic effects from centuries of racist trauma also affect how collective memory through the curriculum re-members people through racialized assemblages in school. Much like the location of Little Africa was passed down through generational knowledge, parents were well aware of necropolitical landscape of schooling. One might wonder what genetic stress response is passed down through schooling.

Sound File: Baby Killers[2]
Sound File: Comments Made[3]
Sound File: School Anxiety[4]
Sound File: Hurtful Words[5]

Schooling at Milford High School, above all, was a mechanism through which children of color were, at best, scrutinized or publicly humiliated or, far worse, had

FIGURE 9.3 Twitter photo of Damari's arrest

their ways of being and knowing publicly and privately choked away. Students of color acted according to whitestream ways of being and knowing, at odds with the ways most white students "acted more Black" than actual students of African descent in this study. The hidden curriculum, and the other forms of curricula that contribute to it, both implicitly and explicitly made the lived experience of students of color in school "distorted and ugly" (Du Bois, 1926, p. 9).

Such distorted ugliness can be heard in the sound files above and read in the student narratives and maps that opened this chapter. At Milford, for students of color, school is a place where their ways of being are so devalued that they either changed how they were in the world in order to gain wiggle room or they played into pervasive social images as a means to create any safe spaces possible. As Ambika noted, this created a sense of hatred because of racism. Or, as Jahmir wrote, students would just try to "go home and not think about [school]." The narratives are more than just the everyday exhaustion, the racial battle fatigue, that students encountered from racist actions and words. In this case, the curriculum became the normalized metaphorical noose that "killed children's aspirations" (Woodson, 1933, p. 8) and locked them in the shackles of sociocultural expectation. Girls of color were expected to layer their ways of being with whiteness in order to get by. Boys of color were understood to be a nuisance, a trouble dealt with in order to safeguard the school.

The implicit and explicit ways that students were metaphorically suffocated at Milford can be heard in the students' voices. Students of color were aware that their race was considered undesirable. This was a felt reality as they encountered racist actions and words from their peers and staff. The everyday aggressions students that encountered produced anxiety and exhaustion, representing at least an ontological degradation and at most a metaphorical lynching that acted to suppress the qualities or persons deemed undesirable through schooling.

In Damari's case, his decision to be physically aggressive was in many ways a direct result of the ongoing background of everyday oppression that had already exterminated his educational future and exemplified the consequences for such behavior. Following Woodson (1933), this educational lynching killed not only his academic self but also placed serious hurdles in his life outside of school, not the least of which was his incarceration. A different kind of death faced girls of color at Milford: loss of self, identity, or positive understandings of womanish ways, deaths that were often less public than the boys' but no less tragic or final. In the common narratives of so many girls of color, these deaths of self were far more private, carried out in the seclusion of offices or Saturday detentions where their bodies were exoticized and their ways of being in the world smothered until nothing was left but the image of a "good girl."

In these and other ways, education for students of color at Milford High was in fact composed of not-so-subtle acts of racialized violence against a small percentage of students based primarily on their race. This not only highlights the

everyday oppressive experiences that students of color experienced at Milford but also, as Woodson (1933) reminds us:

> To handicap a student by teaching him that his Black face is a curse and that his struggle to change his condition is hopeless is the worst sort of lynching. It kills one's aspirations and dooms him to vagabondage and crime. It is strange, then, that the friends of truth and the promoters of freedom have not risen up against the present propaganda in the schools and crushed it. This crusade is much more important than the anti-lynching movement, because there would be no lynching if it did not start in the schoolroom. Why not exploit, enslave, or exterminate a class that everybody is taught to regard as inferior?
>
> *(Woodson, 1933, p. 3)*

As social media and news sources continue to report on the atrocities against Black lives in the United States, Woodson's (1933) quote continues to resonate with the everyday experiences of students of color. Perpetuating such understandings, at the end of four years, some students will likely decide to go to college to become teachers. Understandings about privilege, equity, and access, the very absences articulated throughout this book, are often left out of teacher education programs, and these students' privileged understandings of being and blackness will continue into future classrooms.

Meanwhile, at the end of four years, students of color would have had much of their ways of being and knowing suffocated. Some students in this study, primarily girls, knowingly articulated traded a suffocation of their African American female selves for success at school, a trade that tends to carry with it a distain for the blackness that underlies their sociocultural ability to "act white," which is in itself ultimately an impossibility. As they traded suffocation for the conditional cultural capital of "acting white," their own ways of being ceased to exist. As Woodson (1933) would argue, Milford was successful in educationally lynching many of its girls of color. This is, perhaps, why Sid was able to so clearly and heartbreakingly articulate herself as the "strange fruit" of the school.

Other students in this study, most often young men of color, were funneled into school and social disciplinary structures that set the stage for their entire lives. As described throughout this book, many of these students have fallen into ways of being, everyday actions and interactions, that reify stereotypical norms of blackness. That they have done so by choice does not negate that this is either a mechanism to negotiate being in school or, very likely, not the series of choices they wished to make. They have been ontologically choked. While their ways of being may have resisted and survived, the feeling of being choked by an ontological straitjacket of sociocultural expectations has become a part of how they exist in the world.

Achille Mbembe (2019) describes necropolitics as the "capacity to dictate who is able to live and who must die" (p. 66) by employing insidious weapons to ensure maximum destruction of persons and communities. Although necropolitics is often discussed in terms of physical or social death, I have used it here in terms of ontoepistemological torture (choking) and death (lynching), or the chipping away of students' ways of being, knowing, and doing to preserve hegemonic norms and values. This is not new in U.S. education. One only needs to remember Richard H. Platt's work to "kill the Indian, save the man," where indigenous culture was violently ripped from children at Indian boarding schools. To be clear, Milford is not the same as Indian boarding schools, as the brutalities faced by indigenous children in these schools were not experienced by youth at Milford. Rather, by calling forth this legacy, I am drawing attention to the ways that education has historically been used to force marginalized people to conform to broader values with an explicit goal of causing ontoepistemological death and dying. Educational necropolitics—what Bettina Love called "spirit murdering"—is pervasive across scholarly dialogues, from tracking and testing to the school-to-prison pipeline.

What tends to be missing from these complicated conversations is how everyday necropolitical power is enacted and maintained in schools. This book has focused on how schools consistently re-create contexts where marginalized ontoepistemologies are suspended between life and death. This allows local actors in schools, from students to faculty to administrators, to have greater control over minoritized students until they become or remain funneled into systems (e.g., prisons or disenfranchised city spaces) or die or endure under further necropolitical control across sociopolitical landscapes. Educational necropolitics documents how daily oppressions chip away at students' ontoepistemologies, deciding which may survive and, if so, to what degree they may remain intact.

Throughout this book, student narratives have documented the presences and absences in school that simultaneously normalize broader social ontologies and work to fix sociocultural ideas and ideals of blackness onto yet another generation of young Black bodies and minds. For this and other reasons, I call yet again for greater understanding of the everyday contribution of schooling to ontological choking and educational lynching of young women and men of color. If these reifications of culture continue unabated, as Woodson (1933) noted, there will be no end to the violence against Black bodies in school or in society.

Final Thoughts From a Majestic-ass Bird

Kyle: I feel like we look like an exotic animal to the rest of the community here.

Trevor: Yeah! Like some kind of majestic-ass bird . . . that you only see like once a year.

Kyle: And when you see us it's like doom's coming or, like, Armageddon.

Sound File: Off the Hook[6]

I've decided to end this book on a similar note to how it began: by thinking and listening deeply to narratives from prominent members of The Crew. I often wonder how people who hear these stories will respond. Will it be a call to action for those who might have been unaware of everyday racism in schools? Will it make their blood boil (Du Bois, 1903)? Will it be triggering in ways that I had not intended, as engagements with violent narratives so often are (Mahmood, 2008)?

During my time at Milford High, I found myself trying not to observe too "coldly or too distractedly or too raggedly"; I felt the "rage of cowardice, the insight that is always arriving late, as defiant hindsight"; I am now, as I was then, living the "sense of the utter uselessness of writing anything and yet [feel] the burning desire to write something" (Behar, 1996, p. 2). I have struggled with these stories for years. As their lingering affects crashed against my ways of being, I found myself eagerly falling into other projects rather than revisiting these narratives. And yet, I remained haunted by the stories, which reverberated as quiet whispers and loud cries in my ear. As sonic ethnographers, we often spend time listening deeply and continuously to recordings. We often commit the recordings, and every affect therein, to memory. Over time, I came to feel the movement of sounds despite the silencing of narratives or the distance between my current sense of self and she who had existed during the study.

I come from a tradition of anthropologists who engage in what was and is while envisioning what might be. This book is therefore not solely an analysis of what unfolded at Milford, but a call toward possibilities. I end with an invitation to attend to these narratives with the intention that these stories might shift the norms and values of future generations. I do not hold a naïve understanding about my research, nor do I have the hubris to believe that this book will suddenly shift the oppressive realities of schooling. Rather, I offer a careful, critical engagement with assemblages of hope, a radical act of love (Williams et al., 2020).

And yet, I feel trapped. Trapped, knowing full well that sometimes the act of observing meant that I allowed events to unfold rather than disrupting them. Trapped, knowing that there is no tangible outcome in sight for the issues raised in this book.

And yet, when I checked in with participants before I engaged this final written iteration of the research, many were excited. John, for example, said, "I finally get to be heard in a book. Maybe if they hear us, they will decide it's time to change."

And yet, Sid still grew up in a context where she identified herself as the "strange fruit" of school. My work as a scholar, my diligent recording of her story, does not change the violent experiences that lead to her feelings, nor do they change conditions that lead to John feeling like this book would be the only way his voice was heard.

And yet.

And . . . yet?

As I engaged in the work of making the familiar strange and the strange familiar (Agar, 1996; Spindler & Spindler, 1982), I watched ordinary affects shuttling across the intensities of schooling. Affective intensities are never apolitical or ahistorical. As ordinary affects permeated the forms of curriculum at Milford—formal, enacted, hidden, and null—they engendered and maintained sociopolitical lessons across every space and place in schools, spilling across broader systems of schooling and community contexts. In short, one could ask, "Where do ordinary affects not shape human and nonhuman bodies as they intra-act within necropolitical curricular assemblages in school?"

Notes

1 To review this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/downfall.mp3
2 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/baby-killers.mp3
3 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/comments.mp3
4 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/anxiety.mp3
5 To hear this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/hurtful-words.mp3
6 To review this file, go to: http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/apologies.mp3

Bibliography

Agar, M. H. (1996). *The professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography* (2nd ed.). Academic Press.

Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Beacon Press.

Buchmann, C., DiPrete, T. A., & McDaniel, A. (2008). Gender inequalities in education. *Annual Review of Sociology, 34*, 319–337.

Cooper, A. J. (1892). *A voice from the South, by a Black woman from the South*. University of North Carolina Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of Black folk*. McClurgand.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1926). Criteria of Negro art. *The Crisis, 32,* 290–297.

Fasching-Varner, K. J., Albert, K. A., Mitchell, R. W., & Allen, C. M. (2104). *Racial battle fatigue in higher education: Exposing the myth of post-racial America*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Gershon, W. S. (2017). *Curriculum and students in classrooms: Everyday urban education in an era of standardization*. Lexington Books.

Gupta, A., & Ferguson, J. (1997). *Culture, power, place: Explorations in critical anthropology*. Duke University Press.

Helfenbein, R. J. (2021). *Critical geographies of education: Space, place, and curriculum inquiry.* Routledge.

King, N. S. (2017). When teachers get it right: Voices of Black girls' informal STEM learning experiences. *Journal of Multicultural Affairs*, *2*(1), 1–16.

Mahmood, C. K. (2008). Anthropology from the bones: A memoir of fieldwork, survival, and commitment, *Anthropology and Humanism, 33(2),* 1–11.

Mbembe, A. (2019). *Necropolitics.* Duke University Press.

Mills, C. W. (1998). *Blackness visible: Essays on philosophy and race.* Cornell University Press.

Spindler, G. & Spindler, L. (1982). Roger Harker and Schonhausen: From the familiar to the strange and back again. In G. Spindler (Ed.), *Doing the ethnography of schooling.* Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Varenne, H., & McDermott, R. (1998). *Successful failure: The school America builds.* Westview.

Winfield, A. G. (2007). *Eugenics and education in America: Institutionalized racism and the implications of history, ideology, and memory*. Peter Lang.

Williams, K. T. E., Baszile, D. T., & Guillory, N. A. (Eds.). (2020). *Black women theorizing curriculum studies in colour and curves*. Routledge.

Woodson, C.G. (1933). *The miseducation of the negro.* Tribeca Books.

Yehuda, R., & Bierer, L. M. (2009). The relevance of epigenetics to PTSD: Implications for the DSM-V. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, *22*(5), 427–434.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

APPENDIX

CHAPTER 1 Reverberating Knots: Milford and The Crew

Track #	*Track Name*	*Voices Heard*	*Full Link*
Track 1	Feelings of Pride	Compilation	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/News1.mp3
Track 2	Arrested or Beaten at School	Compilation	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/News-2.mp3
Track 3	Visible Bruises	Taylor Javonte Ada Mr. Bruno	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/bruises.mp3
Track 4	War of the Half-breeds	Dr. Wozolek Darius	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Half-Breeds.mp3
Track 5	Off the Hook	Darius	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/apologies.mp3

CHAPTER 2 Too Black for School: Finding Places, Making Spaces

Track #	*Track Name*	*Voices Heard*	*Full Link*
Track 1	*ABC*	The Jackson 5	https://youtu.be/64n-t9Sw7F0
Track 2	The Stairs	Johnathan	http://boniwozolek.com/wp- http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_Stairs.mp3
Track 3	The Cafeteria	Sierra	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_Cafe.mp3
Track 4	Administration	Mr. Drake	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_Admin.mp3
Track 5	Staff	Mrs. Smith	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_Teacher.mp3
Track 6	White Students	Clara	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_White-Students.mp3
Track 7	Mother and Son	Daniel	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Daniel-Cafe.wav
Track 8	Cafeteria Employee	Ms. Jenny	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Cafe-Staff.mp3
Track 9	Getting Stopped	Troy, Sam, Mr. Cheshire, Matthew, Mr. DeVitis, Mr. Acker, Deryl	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Getting-stopped.mp3
Track 10	Making Bets	Amani	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/making-bets.mp3

CHAPTER 3 No After School Special

Track #	*Track Name*	*Voices Heard*	*Full Link*
Track 1	White Students	Clara	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_White-Students.mp3
Track 2	Only Athlete of Color	John	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Only-athlete-of-color.mp3
Track 3	Unwanted	Rynnelle	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/unwanted.mp3
Track 4	Mobbin'	Smithville Gang	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/mobbin.mp3
Track 5	Not Weak	Matthew, Jahmir, Andrew	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/not-weak.mp3
Track 6	Adapting	Amani	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/adapting.mp3
Track 7	Expectations of Blackness	John Rynnelle	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/expectations-of-blackness.mp3
Track 8	Dating White Girls	Amani	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Dating-White-Girls.mp3
Track 9	Snapback	Johnathan, Matthew, Andrew	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/snapback.mp3
Track 10	Halloween	Amani	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Halloween.mp3
Track 11	Administration	Mr. Drake	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Little-Africa_Admin.mp3
Track 12	Because I Hugged Her	John	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Hug.mp3
Track 13	Because I'm Black	Raquel	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Because-Im-black.mp3

CHAPTER 4 "And That's My Struggle Bus"

Track #	*Track Name*	*Voices Heard*	*Full Link*
Track 1	Singing	Kadence	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/singing.mp3
Track 2	Royals	Lorde	https://youtu.be/nlcIKh6sBtc
Track 3	Best Behavior	Krista	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/good-behavior.mp3
Track 4	Unwanted	Rynnelle	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/unwanted.mp3
Track 5	Athletically Advantaged	Sierra, Raquel, Shay	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/athletically-advantaged.mp3
Track 6	Reactions	Sierra	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/reactions.mp3
Track 7	Dating White Girls	Sierra, Shay, Raquel	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Dating-White-Girls.mp3
Track 8	Slave Feet	Matthew, Johnathan, Andrew	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/slave-feet.mp3
Track 9	Pajama Pants	Raquel	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/pajama-pants.mp3
Track 10	An Army	Rynnelle, Trent, Ava	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/army.mp3
Track 11	F★★kin' Problems	A$AP Rocky	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liZm1im2erU

CHAPTER 6 Framed, Again

Track #	*Track Name*	*Voices Heard*	*Full Link*
Track 1	Do you do drugs?	Sierra	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/drugs.mp3
Track 2	Getting Stopped	Troy, Sam, Mr. Cheshire, Matthew, Mr. DeVitis, Mr. Acker, Deryl	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Getting-stopped.mp3

Track #	Track Name	Voices Heard	Full Link
Track 3	Ancestors	Sierra, Shay	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ancestors.mp3
Track 4	Downfall of the World	Jeff	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/downfall.mp3

CHAPTER 7 Arrested by Norms

Track #	Track Name	Voices Heard	Full Link
Track 1	Using the "N-word"	Sierra	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/N-Word.mp3
Track 2	Art Is a Joy	Ambika	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/art.mp3
Track 3	Sitting in the Way Back	Sierra	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Way-Back.mp3
Track 4	Cafeteria Trays	Troy	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Cafeteria-Trays.mp3
Track 5	Fight	Andrew, Matthew, Johnathan	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/fight.mp3
Track 6	Police Perspective	Officer Volk	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/police-perspective.mp3
Track 7	Rapping	Sierra Dr. Wozolek Shay Demarcus	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/rapping.mp3
Track 8	Birthday	Shyanne	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/birthday.mp3
Track 9	Good Behavior	Krista	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/good-behavior.mp3
Track 10	Expectations of Blackness	John Rynnelle	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/expectations-of-blackness.mp3
Track 11	Reindeer Games	Sierra	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/games.mp3

(*Continued*)

CHAPTER 7 (Continued)

Track #	*Track Name*	*Voices Heard*	*Full Link*
Track 12	Parts of the Gym	Raquel, Shay	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/gym.mp3
Track 13	Nonstrict Class	Bethany	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/non-strict-class.mp3

CHAPTER 8 Fields, Shame, and Schooling

Track #	*Track Name*	*Voices Heard*	*Full Link*
Track 1	Downfall of the World	Jeff	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/downfall.mp3
Track 2	Only Black Athlete	John	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Only-athlete-of-color.mp3
Track 3	Do You Do Drugs?	Sierra	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/drugs.mp3

CHAPTER 9 Necropolitics of Schooling

Track #	*Track Name*	*Voices Heard*	*Full Link*
Track 1	Downfall of the World	Jeff	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/downfall.mp3
Track 2	Baby Killers	Raquel, Sierra, Shay	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/baby-killers.mp3
Track 3	Comments Made	Johnathan	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/comments.mp3
Track 4	School Anxiety	Sierra	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/anxiety.mp3
Track 5	Hurtful Words	Amani	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/hurtful-words.mp3
Track 6	Off the Hook	Darius	http://boniwozolek.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/apologies.mp3

INDEX

Note: Locators in *italic* refer to figures; Locators followed by "n" indicate endnotes.

abductive reasoning within ethnographic research 5
acting white/being black 78–82, 135, 154–156, 167
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The (Twain) 138
affective curriculum 110–111
affects 4, 110, 111, 146
African American intellectual traditions, dialogues across 4, 8, 79, 145, 146, 168
Agar, M. H. 5, 42
agency in schools 145; act of 54; agential realism 109; agentic contingencies 4–8; of memory 109; role in students of color 80; students enacted 139; and underlife of institution 156–161
"angry Black man" stereotype 149, 153, 157
anthropology 37
Anzaldúa, Gloria 92
art classes for White people 124–125
assemblages of violence 35, 110
auditory mapping 55, 56, 65–66, 137, 177–182

Barad, Karen 6, 7, 54, 60, 80, 108, 109
Bates, Daisy 22
Behar, Ruth 37
"being" something 65–68
Bentley 111
best behavior of girls of color 89, 90
Bethune, Mary McLeod 92
"big names" 112
Biles, Simone 91
Black and brown students: athletics cultural capital 153; contributions to society 22; in Little Africa 58; racial injustice to 134; rates of incarceration 23, 25n2; safe place for 57; impact of self-fulfilling prophecies of failure 138; (re)membering 40–42; silencing of 13, 14, 96; "success/failure" binary as 147; targeting for punishments for male 86; in white school 22; *see also* boys of color; girls of color
Black, Indigenous, Students of Color (BISOC) 12
Black Lives Matter movement 7, 9, 44
blackness 8, 78, 81, 112–113, 156; performativity of 65–68; racist ideas about 1–2; *see also* whiteness
Black Student Union 96
"Black superstar athlete", ideals of 157
Black voices and perspectives 2
Bond, Julian 22
Bourdieu, Pierre 83, 98, 100, 150–152
boys of color 24, 41, 75–76, 80, 84, 89, 91, 100, 137, 152; difficulties for "acting Black" 149; everyday experiences of 84; using Little Africa as safe place 87,

89–90; marginalization 95; negotiate ideas and ideals of racialized masculinity 160–161; opinion of school 170; resentment toward treatment from school community 86; risk in using sociocultural expressions of self 154; *see also* Black and brown students; girls of color
Bridges, Ruby 22
Butler, J. 36

"capitals of shame" 75, 137, 151, 154
Carney, William Harvey 22
Civil Rights Movement 21, 22, 112
collective memories 108–109, 114–115, 138, 168
colonized intellectuals 108, 150
Colvin, Claudette 112
community spaces in Little Africa 60–64
conditional movement 154–156
Cooper, Anna Julia 4, 8, 92, 111, 135
Crenshaw, Kimberle xiv, 4, 92, 149, 154
"Crew, The" 23, 43–49, 58, 59, 145, 173
Criteria of Negro Art (Du Bois) 125
critical race theory: attack on 146; debate around 19
cultural capital 24, 25, 72, 134–135, 137; and being Black and male 152–154; cultural replication of identities 75; defacement of photos 74; for discussing nonfinancial assets 152; students of color and 72–74, *73;* for young women of color 154
cultural toolkit analogy 157–158
Culture and Truth (Rosaldo) 37
curricular affects 111
curricular assemblages of racism 146
curricular violence 20–22
curriculum, forms of 110, 174; enacted curriculum 21, 22, 23, 67, 70, 111, 113, 118, 121, 174; formal curriculum 21–24, 112, 120, 121, 134, 174; hidden curriculum 21, 22, 24, 70, 99, 111, 120, 121, 174; local actors relationships with 111; null curriculum 21, 22, 48–49, 139, 174; thinking about intricacies of 110; trajectories of failure across 137–139

deep listening through sonic ethnography 13–20
Deleuze, G. xii
Delpit, Lisa 110
Dewey, J. 111
Diamond, Dion 112
difference-as-deficit model 146
discipline-worthy actions 147
discipline ladder using in schools 147–149, 161
distorted ugliness 48, 170
double consciousness for people of color 92
Douglass, Frederick 22
Du Bois, W. E. B. 8, 48, 92, 111, 125, 139

echoes 34–35
Eckert, P. 75
educational necropolitics xiii, 22; in assemblages of violence 110; ontoepistemological choking and lynching in schools 8–13, 25; theorization of 3–4
embodied practices of curricula 111–112
Emdin, Chris 79
enacted curricula/curriculum 21, 22, 23, 67, 70, 111, 113, 118, 121, 174
entanglement of bodies, histories, cultures 37
epigenetics 169

Fanon, F. 150
fields 150–152
flirtation, act of 154
Floyd, George 7
formal curricula/curriculum 21–24, 112, 120, 121, 134, 174
Foucault, Michel 4; framing of biopolitics and biopower 9; theorization of power 4–5, 123; work on biopower 36
Freire, P. 36, 97
friction 5; between marginalized students and mainstream pushes 123; between territorial jurisdictions and surveillance spaces 159–160

Gallagher, Michael 19
Garvey, Marcus 22
gaslighting 13–14, 25, 109, 121, 150
Gay-Straight Alliance 98
Geertz, Clifford 37
Genders and Sexualities Alliance groups (GSA groups) 2, 43, 72, 96, 98, 101n12
Gershon, Walter 14, 17, 19
"ghetto" behavior 146, 153
girls of color 24, 41, 84–85, 91, 92, 168; acceptable behaviors 89–90; acting white 35, 154–156, 171; cultural capital and 134–135, 137, 154; cultural capital for 154; difficulties for "acting Black"

149; lived experiences of 86–87; opinion of school 170; pressures of 86; restroom as safe places for 87–89; spaces and places in school *88*; spaces of possibility 95–99; success in higher education 167; womanish ways in Little Africa 90–95; *see also* Black and brown students; boys of color
Glissant xiii, 5, 59, 70, 78, 79; description of versions of self 156; discussion of presentations of self, male students of color 153; about spaces of possibility 95–96; surveillance spaces 158; territorial jurisdictions 158, 160; work on asylums 156–157
Guattari, F. xii
Gutierrez, K. 156

haptic noise/sounds 48
Harmon, Katharine 19
Helfenbein, Robert 19, 55, 123
Hemmings, Sally 22
hidden curricula/curriculum 21, 22, 24, 70, 99, 111, 120, 121, 174; affecting parents of color 168–169; racialized 118, 153; of racial value 112–113
historical amnesia 116–121
homophobia, racialization of 98
houses in Milford High School 56–60
Houston, Charles Hamilton 112
Hudson, P. J. 137

imbrications of actions 4–8
injustice, pedagogies of 22
intention and attention processes 17–18
inter-actions 7
interpersonal ethics 16
intersectionality of race and gender 154–156
intersections of ethnographic methodologies 14–15
intimacy in listening 16
intra-actions 5, 7–8, 18, 54, 109, 113, 114

James, R. 34

Kikuyu (Bantu-speaking group) x, xiv, 2
King Jr., Martin Luther 22, 112
Ku Klux Klan 121

Laura, Crystal 79
LGBTGNQIA2S+ population/students 10, 38, 62, 67, 98, 159
Little Africa 23, 24, 43, 44, 70, 95–99, 100–101; "being" something 65–68; defaced sign above *59*; in Milford High School 56–60; morning places and community spaces in 60–64, 71; performativity of blackness 65–68; as safe space 76–77 87, 89–90, 150, 160; as spaces of possibility 95–99; in surveillance space 158–159; womanish ways in 90–95
living dead 10–11, 12, 22, 110
local actors 4–5, 100, 110–112, 131, 151, 156; access to underlife of institution 95–96; actions from possibilities 123; degree of agency 152; ways of being, knowing, and doing of 54
Lorde, Audre 87, 130, 131
Love, Bettina 4, 10–11, 79, 172
lynching in schools 8–13, 49, 112

Malcolm X 22
male students of color 65, 86, 92, 94, 129, 153, 154; marginalization at school 81; participating in athletics 72, 74; suburban and urban 76; threats of violence among 77–78
mapping projects 19–20, 5, 565, 68n2
Massey, Doreen 19, 101, 138, 159
Mbembe, Achille 9–10, 36, 172
McCartney, Audra 16
McDermott, Ray 3, 98
McGranahan, C. 59
McKittrick, Katherine xii, 19, 41, 130
memories 107–108, 114; collective 108–109, 114–115, 138, 168; functions of 108–109; historical amnesia 116–121; recall and recognition 108
Metz, Mary 99
Milford High School 2–3, 23; anthropologic al research in 37–40; art classes for White people 124–125; athletic cultural capital 72–75; capitals of shame in 152; collective memory of 114–115; cultural capital and being Black and male in 152–154; curricular violence in 21–22; using discipline ladder in 147–149; etiquette in 45–47; failure of marginalized students and communities 146; finding spaces in academic places 130–131; forms of cultural capital in 152; importance of athletic program 72; Little Africa, houses, and safe spaces 56–60; morning places and community spaces in 60–64; negotiation of students of color for spaces and places 164–166; ontoepistemological choking and

lynching in schools 8–13; (re)membering Black and Brown stories 40–42; rich moments at 42–44; safe spaces and places 25; schooling at 169–170; sonic ethnography studies 15; spaces and places in schooling 54–56, 123; students using underlife in 145; tracing reverberations of racism 47–49; trajectories of failure 137–139; *see also* students of color
Mills, C.W. 5, 83, 96, 98, 158, 168
minority population 69n15
Mitchell, R.W 112
morning places in Little Africa 60–64, 71
Morrison, Toni 138
Moten, F. 12
multiplicity of space and intra-actions 18
Murray, Pauli 112

Nanda, J. 149
necropolitics of schooling 172
negotiation of shame 150–152
Nespor, Jan 19, 47, 110
No Child Left Behind movement 10
null curricula/curriculum 21, 22, 48–49, 139, 174

Ocen, P 149
Oliveros, Pauline 15
ontoepistemological choking and lynching in schools 8–13, 25
oppression xiii, 5, 97, 138, 170; ability to resist and/or refuse systems of 26n3; agency's actions and reactions to and against 60; echo chamber of 35, 36, 92, 116, 145; impacting Black peoples 9, 150; places to resist and refuse 46, 59
oppressive silence 139–140
ordinary affects 54; complexity of 34; in constant circulation across assemblages 110; movement of 34; politics of 33, 34; of schools 33
Ortner, Sherry 4–5; about power and agency relationship 5, 6–7; practice theory 5–6

Page, Reba 112
Parks, Rosa 22, 112
pedagogy of injustice 68
performativity of blackness 65–68
physical death of people and communities 10
Platt, Richard H. 172
Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination (Morrison) 138
Pollock, Della xii
pounding, practice of 98
Powell, Kimberly 19
power: shift 5; theorization of 4–5, 123
practice theory 5–6
Presentations of Self in Everyday Life (Goffman) 78
Prior, Jonathan 19
Puar, Jasbir 6, 11, 36

queerness 95–99
Quinn, Molly 20

racist/racism/racialization 8; curricular assemblages of 146; of homophobia 98; ideas about blackness 1–2; normalized ideas of 99; racialized and gendered understandings of students of color 146–147; in schooling 40; student's mapping of 164–166, 170; tracing reverberations of 47–49
reciprocity 111
Reese, Frederick D. 22
refusal 26n3, 59, 70, 96, 111
relation between marginalization and anthropology 15
re-membering 108, 109, 113
resilience 96
resistance 26n3, 70, 95–96
reverberation 108; anthropological research in Milford High School 37–40; *vs.* echoes 34–35; etiquette in at Milford High School 45–47; literal and metaphorical 34; of posttraumatic stress disorder 35; of racism 47–49; (re)membering Black and Brown stories 40–42; rich moments at Milford High School 42–44; time 34
rhizomes xii
Rosaldo, Renato 37
Rosiek, Jerry 8
Rustin, Bayard 112
Rymes, B. 156

safe spaces 68n4, 76–77, 160; cafeteria as or 125–130; Little Africa as 76–77 87, 89–90, 150, 160; in Milford High School 56–60; and places 25
Sankofa (metaphorical symbol) 9
savior complex 83, 140n10
school-to-prison pipeline 25–26n2, 67, 149, 166–167

schooling at Milford High School 169–170
School Safety Division 25–26n2
Schwab, J. J. 22, 49, 111
Scott, James 5
Sensuous Scholarship (Stoller) 37
sexual orientation, normalized 98
shame: capitals of 75, 137, 151, 154; negotiation of 150–152
Sharpe, C. 61
silence/silencing 35; movement in 35–36; oppressive 139–140
Simpson 36
slavery 20, 21–22, 112, 120
"slavery *or* Civil Rights" 21
social ontology: Mills' discussion of 158; pushing against 131–135
social/physical movement 135–137
sociocultural mobility 72
sociocultural spaces and places 68n2
Soja, Edward 19
sonic episteme 34
sonic ethnography, deep listening through 13–20; deep listening 15–16; gaslighting 13–14; Gershon's scholarship and personal guidance 14; intention and attention processes 17–18; interpersonal ethics 16; intersections of ethnographic methodologies 14–15; intimacy in listening 16; mapping projects 19–20; multiplicity of space and intra-actions 18; relation between marginalization and anthropology 15; silencing of Black and brown youth 13, 14; sonical thinking and listening 16–17; sound politics 13; space and place 19; spaces of learning *18*; story telling 14; thinking about resonance 17
sound politics 13
space–place and being connections 99–101
space(s) 123; in academic places 130–131; of learning *18;* multiplicity of 18; and places in schooling 19, 54–56; of possibility 95–99
special education programs 11–12
Spencer, Herbert 109
spirit murdering 172
Spivak, G. C. 5, 44, 98
Stewart, Kathleen 33
Stoller, Paul 37
story telling 14
students of color 55, 64, 66, 70, 71–72, 171; acting white/being black 78–82; agency and underlife of institution 156–161; cafeteria as safe space for 125–130; connections of space, place, and being 99–101; cultural capital and 72–75, *73*, 152–154*;* discipline ladder for 147–149; division of 75–76; education at Milford High for 170–171; enacted agency to "be" in school 96; experiencing multiplicity of violences 146; fields, schooling, and negotiating shame 150–152; finding spaces in academic places 130–131; framing of 115; across gender identities 86; historical amnesia 116–121; imapct of inequities in school 67; intent of songwriting 77–78; narratives of 41–42; negotiation for spaces and places 166; opinion of school 169–170; perspectives about group 82–85; pressure from racialized sociocultural norms and values 150; pushing against social ontology 131–135; racialization of homophobia 98; racialized and gendered understandings 146–147; school-to-prison pipeline 25–26n2, 67, 149, 166–167; self-fulfilling prophecies of failure 138; signifyin(g) 77; socially constructed boundaries 75; social/physical movement and sounding black 135–137; standardized test scores 115–116, *155*; studies of marginalization through schooling 167–168; urbanness 76–77
surveillance spaces 158–160
Swidler, A. 157–158

Tatum, Beverly 62, 129, 130
territorial jurisdictions 158, 160
"testing problems" in school 153
tricana poveira xi, xiv, 3
Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt 5, 159
Tuan, Y. F. 61
Twain, Mark 138

underlife of school/institution 95–99, 145, 156–161
United 'Carceral' States of America conversation 166–167

Varenne, Hervé 3, 98
violence: assemblages of 110; assemblages of 35; curricular 20–22
vulnerability 37
Vulnerable Observer, The (Behar) 37

ways of being, knowing, and doing 111–112, 129–130
Weheliye, Alexander 6, 7
white cishetero curricula 110
whiteness 81, 83; ideal of 155–156; normalized through schooling 138; *see also* blackness
Whiteness as Property (Harris) 83
white supremacy 8, 38, 138
Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race (Tatum) 129–130
Williams, Raymond 5
Williams, Serena 91
Winfield, Ann 3, 61, 108
womanish ways in Little Africa 90–95
Woods, C. 130
Woodson, Carter G. xiii, 1–2, 6, 8, 49, 111, 113, 121, 135, 150, 170–171
Wynter, Sylvia xii, 92

young men of color *see* boys of color
young women of color *see* girls of color